Linguistic needs, tutoring options and support mechanisms:

A framework of an ESP course for foreign football players in the English Premier League

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For my late grandfather Herbert

who always believed in me

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List of abbreviations

ASE	Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence
BTEC	Business And Technology Education Council
CA	Contrastive Analysis
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EA	Error Analysis
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a foreign language
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
ESL	English as a second language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
EST	English for Science and Technology
EU	European Union
FA	Football Association
FD	Field dependence
FI	Field independence
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GE	General Purpose English
GPE	General Purpose English

IL	Interlanguage
IT	Information Technology
L1	First language or mother tongue
L2	Second language
LAD	Language Acquisition Device
LSP	Languages for Specific Purposes
MDH	Markedness Differential Hypothesis
NA	Needs Analysis
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
SLA	Second language acquisition
SP-LT	Special-purpose language teaching
TL	Target language
TPR	Total Physical Response
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
UG	Universal Grammar

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1 General Introduction

For decades English language teaching has put a strong focus on grammar and literature and thus has been taught as a means to its own end. Linguistics in general was mainly concerned with the description of the grammar of a language. With international commerce and research it became more important for scientists, businessmen or engineers to use English in their specialised domains. General English (GE) did not serve this target group's needs. As a consequence, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as an autonomous field of linguistics, began to emancipate itself gradually from General English in the 1960s. Researchers in the 1960s and 1970s became increasingly interested in how language is used in real communication. In 1977 Strevens (1977:145) wrote that there is a "trend towards the learning of languages for specific rather than for general purposes". Parallel to this development, the learner was gradually put in the centre of the learning process. It was acknowledged that different learners have different needs and interests which have to be met in language courses.

From its beginnings, ESP has been struggling to find its position within the field of applied linguistics. Because of this struggle, there was no clear-cut definition available but it was evident that there was a need for ESP. Even today there is no definition of ESP that is valid for all ESP fields. It was even argued (Robinson 1991) that it is not possible to find a definition because there are so many different approaches to ESP around the world. ESP constantly had to defend itself against the accusation that there is nothing specific about it and that it is just another way of teaching General English. But the main difference between ESP and General English is precisely what their titles suggest: English for specific purposes is taught because a certain group of people has a very particular need to learn English. This need is determined through a needs analysis. General English courses in school mostly do not establish a need before they are taught. One could argue that not only ESP, but also General English courses, should start with a needs analysis. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:53) state that, "what distinguishes ESP from General English is not the

existence of a need as such but rather an *awareness* of the need". Widdowson (1983) sees the difference between General Purpose English (GPE) and ESP in the way in which purposes are defined and the manner of their implementation. The purpose of ESP is to find out what learners need in order to achieve their occupational and academic aims as well as to prepare them for future language use. GPE on the other hand fulfils educational needs which will equip the learners with knowledge and the ability to deal with "undefined eventualities" (Widdowson 1983:6) for future use.

ESP first and foremost relates to particular disciplines, occupations and activities. Therefore it has developed its own syllabi, goals and objectives. Furthermore, an ESP teacher has to fulfil different requirements to a "traditional" English teacher. He/She cannot fall back on ready-made materials but has to design the course materials him/herself which, in most cases, takes a lot of time and effort. The target audience in an ESP course are mostly adults who have a different cognitive development as well as different learning needs and learning strategies than children at school. Even though the ESP tutor does not need to invent new teaching methods, he/she has to be very careful and experienced to choose the right ones for his/her particular group of adult learners. What makes the situation even more complex is the fact that ESP teachers are in most cases no subject specialists and have to rely on their students' specialist knowledge.

There is agreement that needs analysis and description of language use in occupations is central within ESP. There is less agreement about the groups of learners (identical needs or similar needs) and the scope of the field (broad or narrow). Scientists also do not agree on whether an ESP methodology exists or how specific an ESP course should be. Furthermore, English only has an auxiliary role to play as the language is a means to improve the specialist education of the learners. (Mackay/Mountford 1978:2).

The most common ESP courses are Business English courses or courses for technicians. These two target groups, however, are by far not the only ones that need specialised English teaching. Similarly, foreign football players who are

signed with clubs in the English Premier League need a specialised English course in order to be able to communicate with coaches, physiotherapists and fellow colleagues. Today football is a global phenomenon and an immensely important economic sector. This can be seen in the fact that, for the first time in 2009, the UEFA's Champions League football final has replaced the NFL's Super Bowl as the most-watched annual sports event.[1] Clubs around Europe sell and buy players for unbelievable amounts of money. Supporters contribute to the whole sector by buying all sorts of merchandise of their favourite clubs and more and more businessmen and oligarchs buy themselves football clubs.

The English Premier League is one of the most attractive football leagues in the world and players from nearly all around the globe play for English football clubs. Football in general and foreign players in particular have not only attracted the attention of sport analysts, scouts and managers, but of more and more researchers as well, who have dealt with the phenomenon of football from many diverse angles. There are numerous studies that focus on the linguistic particularities of the world of football, like football reports and commentary, football jargon, the general terminology of football (e.g. Lavric et al. 2008). The psychological and physiological side of the sport is also dealt with. Scientists analysed, for example, information processing perspectives in sport, the attention level during motor skill acquisition or anatomical prerequisites for learning (e.g. Williams and Hodges 2004). Among others, Holt and Mitchell (2006) dealt with talent development in English soccer and Reeves et al. (2009) described stressors and coping strategies among Premier League Academy Soccer Players. Maguire and Pearton (2000) studied the impact of elite labour migration on the identification, selection and development of European soccer players and Bourke (2002) analysed the career paths of young Irish football players in England. Rutten et al. (2008) looked at on- and off-field antisocial and pro-social behaviour in adolescent soccer players. There is also a large body of research

[1] http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/europe/8490351.stm (13.5.2010)

around the labour migration of football players. Bale and Maguire (1994) devoted a whole book to the athletic talent migration in an interdependent world. The topic received major attention after the Bosman ruling[2] in 1995.

Even though quite a few studies which try to explain phenomena in and around football teams exist, hardly any study deals with language learning in multilingual sport settings, specifically in football academies. There is scarcely any literature about linguistic and cultural interactions in team sports and football in general. An exception is Schilling (2001), who analysed communication between coach and players in amateur football. He looked at roles in amateur football and how they are filled and which semantic meaning the utterances of coaches and players have. The study is descriptive in nature and wants to look at the varieties of actions found in the amateur football environment. Sociological, linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects among others are combined with the specific language of football players and coaches.

Kellerman, Koonen and van der Haagen (2005) analysed the language situation in multilingual Dutch, and to a lesser extent, in English football clubs. They raised the question why some players or managers speak the language of the host country exceptionally well, while others more or less failed. Their study is embedded in the field of language learning in international sports settings. They concluded that European football clubs had language-related problems but wanted to find out whether these clubs also recognised the language needs of their foreign players. A survey was carried out in which Dutch clubs, players, coaches and teachers were interviewed. They also investigated the situation in English clubs but only one club was willing to answer their questions and to give interviews.

More recently, the Innsbruck Football Research Group (Giera et al. 2008) proposed a project to look into communicative processes, multilingualism, lingua

[2] The outcome of the Bosman ruling was that European community law had to be applied to sport as well. This meant that quotas for football players were against the free movement of workers.

franca communication and non-verbal semiotic systems in multilingual football teams (forthcoming publication). Training sessions and team discussions of international clubs will be analysed. The main aim is to scientifically describe communication processes and strategies in multilingual football teams.

Stratton et al. (2004) studied the role of the soccer academy, which is one of the very few resources that specifically deal with academy players and the structure of football academies. There exist several studies on psychological, sociological or talent development of adolescent players (e. g. Rutten et al. 2008, Holt/Mitchell 2006, Reeves/Nicholls/McKenna 2009, Richardson/Gilbourne/Littlewood 2004) but the only published work on the organisation and the general situation of youth football in England, is the recently published “Every Boy’s Dream” (Green, 2009). Green describes the history of England’s youth football and the most important developments up to the present day.

To my knowledge, there does not exist any study that deals particularly with the linguistic situation of English academy football players. Players of different nationalities within one team are a challenge for any English football club. In order for them to perform at their best, they need to learn English as quickly as possible. They need to be able to get in contact with their fellow players, to understand their coaches and physiotherapists or organise their lives outside their clubs. As many clubs have realised that there are linguistic problems with foreign players, they employ a player liaison officer. This person organises nearly all aspects of the senior footballer’s life off the pitch. Even though many daily language problems can thus be avoided, the player still needs to communicate with his fellow players on the pitch and understand the instructions of the coach. Getting to know and acquiring the English language and culture is a central requirement if people want to achieve their full potential as successful professional football players. Even though the non-verbal language of football might be universal across the globe, it is important for players to make themselves understood in the country they live in. In many cases the players do

not come to England alone but have partners and children who cannot fall back on the universal language of football. They must be able to e.g. go shopping, attend schools or open a bank account. Lanfranchi/Taylor (2001:2) state that from its beginnings, “football was a universal game. As well as being simple to learn and play, it did not require the use of a specific national language, a recognized diploma or acquired qualification…” Given the fact that in modern football the rules are the same all over the globe, it is true that neither these rules nor the game as such are bound to a specific national language. The situation, however, changes significantly when a foreign player starts to play and live abroad.

> *As in any other profession, living and working abroad offers opportunities but also presents problems. Players have to adapt to a new cultural environment, often a different way of working and a new way of life. This can also mean learning a new language. Some find adjustment impossible while others become assimilated or integrated, to varying degrees, into the host society.*
>
> Lanfranchi/Taylor (2001:12)

In order to be successful, clubs do not only need to invest in their senior players. Given the unbelievably high transfer sums that not all clubs can afford to pay, youth players have become more and more important as they are the future of any club. As most of the foreign players do not master the language when they join the club around the age of 16, their first priority is to learn English. Nowadays most Premier League football clubs and academies offer English courses. ESP Teaching is a very complex task and therefore an ESP tutor who teaches football players needs to have knowledge in a variety of fields. First and foremost he/she needs to be an expert in the field of English for specific purposes. In addition to that prerequisite, he/she should be aware of how to deal with individual learner’s differences and needs to have a sound knowledge of second language acquisition theories, course planning, skills, teaching methods and materials as well as the culture of the language in question. A language tutor at football clubs should additionally show some interest in football and the specific living and working conditions of foreign football players.

This thesis tries to demonstrate what linguistic needs foreign football players in the English Premier League have, what tutoring options and support mechanisms could improve the existing language courses and that, without English, players cannot reach their full potential or satisfaction – be it in the club, in private or in both areas of life. It should ultimately provide the theoretical prerequisite for a teaching and learning resource for football players. From personal communication with language tutors in football clubs, I know that different people within the football community are working on assembling teaching resources for their football language courses. Unfortunately, it was not possible for me to get in contact with these people or to get hold of such materials. To my knowledge there is no official resource book to teach English to foreign players in the English Premier League. What does exist, however, is a German language course for foreign players playing in the German Bundesliga. Uwe Wiemann and his team compiled a language course in 17 units for football professionals playing in Germany called “Deutsch für Ballkünstler”. It is strictly football related and covers many aspects that footballers encounter in their daily sport lives. It does not, however, take situations outside the football pitch into account.

This thesis can only be a first and initial step towards the development of an ESP course for football players. I was allowed to record all the personal talks with tutors, coaches, players and physiotherapists, but I (and before me others, too) was not allowed to record training sessions, talks between coaches and players or pre/post-match talks of coaches. The highly competitive nature of football in general and the English Premier League in particular forces clubs to a high level of secrecy. This is especially true for the communication between the coach and the players - the area where, from a linguistic point of view, the most interesting interaction occurs. Even though I was exceptionally fortunate to get restricted insights into football academies, I did not have access to all aspects of the players’ football lives. Therefore I can only present one part of the whole picture.

It is thus not possible to present or analyse the linguistic needs of foreign football players in every detail as due to the described restrictions no comprehensive corpus could be established. I will, however, with the means that were available to me, give an overview of all the elements I consider important when teaching a language course for football players, show where the potential linguistic problems of foreign football players lie and present some possible solutions to overcome them. As a consequence, this work provides a broad overview rather than a narrow and deep focus and is specifically targeted at Premier League academies and, in particular, the academies I could visit and analyse.

1.1 Structure

This thesis is divided into nine main parts which I all find relevant for teaching foreign football players. After a general introduction, the second part gives an overview of the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Over the years it has emancipated itself from General English and at the centre of every ESP course design is a needs analysis which tries to find out the exact needs of its learners. Its results form the basis for the course design. The field of ESP has taken over certain elements of General English courses but has developed syllabi, teaching methods and teaching materials on its own. ESP relates to particular disciplines, occupations and activities and stands in contrast to General English. Furthermore, the second main chapter of the thesis tries to address the questions whether there exists a valid definition of ESP, how specialised ESP teachers need to be and how specific ESP courses should be.

The third part deals with individual learners' differences. Every learner has a different aptitude, motivation, learning styles, learning strategies and personality. All these elements influence the learning of a second language. Another important factor in this respect is age. Chapter three discusses where the differences between adults and adolescent language learners lie.

One of the most important aspects of teaching a second language, is the knowledge of how people manage to learn it. Part four presents a historical

overview of language learning theories. This field of study started in the 1960s and remains controversial to the present day. Researchers have never really agreed on how people manage to acquire a second language. Over the years, however, certain views have become accepted and have led to the development of integrated theories of language learning. Their main findings and propositions should serve language tutors as a basis for their teaching.

Part five takes a closer look at English Premier League football and foreign senior football players. They are the role models for their younger colleagues. Generally, senior players receive the attention of researchers (e.g. Lavric/Steiner 2009) but academy players are faced with many more challenges than just multilingualism within their team. They have to devote a lot of their time to acquiring technical and tactical football skills. At the same time, they find themselves in a difficult personal and cognitive development phase in which they live far away from home and suddenly have to communicate with their colleagues and friends in a different language. Many of these talented young players receive their football and academic education at Premier League Football academies which are very special institutions. Their main structure and aims are presented in this chapter.

Needs analysis occupies a central part in any ESP course. Therefore, I will present a needs analysis of foreign senior players as well as six English Premier League football academies in part six. First of all, foreign players in general are considered before the focus is turned to academy players. Senior players are the ones that the younger players look up to in all respects, so it is interesting to get an understanding of their linguistic problems, challenges and solutions. The necessary insights concerning academy players come from academy staff, language tutors and foreign football players. The analysis of the command of English of foreign football players and the content and organisation of English language courses at different English football clubs should ultimately lead to or be the basis for a curriculum which can be used for English courses for foreign football players in any English football club but predominantly at academy level.

Part seven comprises the analysis and the findings of the needs analysis of the previous part. It is also an attempt to address and give possible answers to the research questions posed in the preceding part. The results of each academy are considered in detail and an overview of different linguistic aspects in relation to foreign football players at academies is presented.

Part eight puts the findings of the six football academies into perspective and tries to present the theoretical framework of a potential football-specific language course. It presents tutoring options and support mechanisms for foreign Premier League academy players. It looks at the topics, functions and skills which should be taught, challenges a language tutor has to face, elements of English culture that are useful to teach, assessment and evaluation of a course and what learning theories – as a whole or in parts – can or should be applied when teaching a language.

Based on the research conducted at English Premier League football academies, the conclusion summarises the findings of the study. Furthermore, it takes into account the findings of the ESP field and of second language learning theories and makes suggestions for possible improvements. The conclusion also lists various fields which are worth analysing in future research projects.

1.2 Personal experience

To establish the distinct language needs of academy football players, it is necessary to do qualitative interviews with coaches, education and welfare officers, physiotherapists, players and language tutors. However, getting in contact with Premier League football clubs was extremely difficult. Kellerman et al. (2005:202) reported similar problems and stated that after having consulted a few clubs by phone "*we soon learnt that most of these clubs (A.N. clubs in the second and third divisions of the Nationwide Football League) did not have any provisions for the few foreign players they employed. What is more, the clubs in our target divisions (FA Barclay Premiership and Nationwide Football League Division One) have proved to be uncooperative (with the exception of Arsenal)*".

In their study Stead/Maguire (2000:39) also report that “problems were encountered in obtaining responses to both the interview and questionnaire request.” Similar to these two research projects, I also experienced that clubs denied that they had linguistic problems but, on the other hand reported that they offer language courses for foreign players. They were not helpful at all and club staff and players alike did not want to fill in questionnaires or give interviews.

In my first attempts to make contact with football clubs, I phoned all clubs of the Premier League and many clubs of the Football League Championship to ask them for interviews with players and staff or completion of a questionnaire. Online it is possible to reach the stadium of every club. However, this is quite useless insofar as all the players and staff spend their time at the respective training grounds which are usually far away from their stadiums. In my first rounds of telephone calls I was not successful at all. Some clubs simply did not want to help me, others told me that they did not have language problems within their team and one club advised me to contact the foreign players directly. After some time I managed to talk to one player liaison officer who told me a bit about his work. He promised to put me in touch with one of their players but did not keep his promise.

By chance and with some luck, I got in contact with and interviewed a language tutor who worked in the Premier League. I had an extensive telephone interview with her and this gave me the first insights into the situation of foreign academy players and challenges for language tutors. She also put me in contact with one of her colleagues in another Premier League club. This language tutor and three of the academy’s players returned their completed questionnaires to me. Finally, I got the telephone number and email address of the education and welfare officer of a Premier League academy. He was willing to help me and even invited me to visit the Academy, which allowed me to collect data for my study. In April 2008, I had the opportunity to visit the first Premier League Football academy. This trip was extremely successful. The education and welfare officer supported my work wherever he could. He showed me around the premises, I could

observe training sessions and language courses, and I could talk to the coaches, the physiotherapist, the language tutor and foreign players. He also put me in contact with his colleagues from two major English clubs. I contacted them and in September 2008, I went for a second research trip to visit two more football academies in England where I had the chance to do more interviews and have personal discussions with foreign players and academy staff. Furthermore, I could interview the language tutor of another major English Premier League club whose insights were very valuable for this thesis.

Parallel to contacting Premier League clubs, I tried to get into contact with Austrian players who played or used to play in Great Britain and had experienced English language problems. I contacted 15 Austrian players but most of them did not answer my mails or their agents did not put me through to them. Finally, I got in contact with a former Austrian football player who used to play in the Scottish league. He filled in my questionnaire and I also was also able to do a telephone interview with him. He arranged for me to talk to other Austrian football players who were willing to help me out. This resulted in one other extensive telephone interview and more completed questionnaires. All senior players, who Dietmar Constantini (in an Interview with the Innsbruck Football Research Group 2006 in Lavric 2008:386) and I had contact with, confirmed that the “players are, in general, experienced professionals who know perfectly well all the moves and tricks that can be applied in a given situation, and who understand on the spot which of them can be used effectively”. This might, to a large extent, be true for senior players but not for academy players who have not completed their technical and tactical development. Therefore, it is very important for them to clearly understand the exercises and the feedback of their coaches in order to get to the point where they “know all their moves and tricks”. Therefore, senior players are not really the right target audience if one wishes to analyse the language learning situation and language courses at football clubs.

2 English for specific purposes (ESP)

English for specific purposes (ESP) is placed within the tradition of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL). The term ESP has changed over time from standing for “English for Special Purposes” to “English for Specific Purposes”. “ESP is essentially a materials- and teaching-led movement.” (Dudley-Evans and St John 1998:19). Materials production and text analysis of written and spoken texts is predominant. Furthermore, a “learner-centred education” became popular in ESP. It is not the teacher who is at the centre of teaching but the learner with his/her particular needs and requirements. Similarly Strevens (1977:146) suggests that, “special-purpose language teaching (SP-LT) occurs whenever the content and aims of the teaching are determined by the requirements of the learner rather than by external factors such as general educational criteria”.

ESP as a separate discipline within applied linguistics appeared around 1960. Some even trace its history back to the 16th century when the first phrase book for foreign tourists was written. The first conference on languages for special purposes took place in 1969 and marked the beginning of the field. Richards (2001:28) sees (1) the need to prepare growing numbers of non-English background students for study at American and British universities from the 1950s, (2) the need to prepare materials to teach students who had already mastered general English, but now needed English for use in employment, such as non-English background doctors, nurses, engineers, and scientists, (3) the need for materials for people needing English for business purposes and (4) the need to teach immigrants the language needed to deal with job situations, as the four reasons for the development of ESP in the 1960s.

During the Second World War it became important to equip soldiers in the armed forces with sufficient command of a language and intensive teaching and learning of a range of special languages for restricted aims became established. Later on newly independent countries, especially in Africa, did not want to learn

the language of their occupying force and used English only as a means to become economically, politically and technologically independent. With the growth of international trade and multi-national companies, English courses for business purposes became very popular. There was a new demand to conduct business in a foreign language. Technology and commerce became the driving forces after the Second World War. As the USA was the biggest and most influential player in these sectors, the language for international technology and commerce became English. Thus, people outside the USA who wanted to participate on the world market had to learn English. Even though ESP emerged in the 1960s, by the end of the 1970s there was no clear-cut definition of ESP available. Different researchers tried to formulate definitions from various angles. Robinson (1980:13) states that an ESP course is purposeful, aimed at the successful performance of occupational or education roles, based on the analysis of students' needs and is tailor-made. ESP courses are different in skills, topics, situations, functions and language and level of competence in the language.

Strevens (1977:150, 1988: 1-2) and Dudley-Evans/St John (1998:4-5) lay down general criteria as well as absolute and variable characteristics that defined special-purpose language teaching:

General criteria	- the language-using purposes of the learner are paramount - courses are defined by restriction (only basic skills), selection (only language items that are required by the learner's purpose), themes and topics (that are required by the learner's purpose) and communicative needs - any methodology that is appropriate for the specific learning/teaching situation can be applied

Absolute characteristics	- designed to meet specified needs of the learner - related in content to particular disciplines, occupations and activities - centred on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of this discourse - in contrast with "General English" - ESP makes use of the underlying methodology and activities of the disciplines it serves
Variable Characteristics	- ESP may be, but is not necessarily restricted to the language skills to be learnt and not taught according to any pre-ordained methodology - EPS may be related to or designed for specific disciplines - ESP methodology may change from that of general English - ESP is mostly designed for adult learners (but not necessarily so) - ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students

Table 1: Criteria and characteristics that define ESP language teaching

Fairly early in the 1980s Widdowson (1983:10) states that ESP lacks a theory.

> *"Instead of a theory we have an assumption that ESP is simply a matter of describing a particular area of language and then using this description as a course specification to import to learners the necessary restricted competence to cope with this particular area."*

He continues by stating that ESP can be seen as a continuum with "training at one end and education at the other" (11). What is clear is that in ESP courses students learn English only as a means to another professional or academic aim. The language helps them to be better at what they are actually doing or working on. Similarly, in 1980 Sager (1980:1) writes, "As yet special languages are

neither defined nor is there general agreement about their scope". It was high time to find a suitable definition because at the beginning of the 1980s ESP courses had found their way into most educational institutions around the world without being clear on their scope. What makes it nearly impossible to find a common definition is the fact that "ESP may be seen as pluralistic, because many approaches to it are currently being followed around the world today" (Robinson 1991:1). This means that there are different perceptions and opinions around the world as to what this specificity means. Robinson's (1991:1) conclusion is that "thus it is impossible to produce a universally applicable definition of ESP."

Hutchinson and Waters (1987:18) approach the matter of definition from a different angle. They are often cited for their list what ESP is *not* rather than what it is: (1) ESP is *not* a matter of teaching "specialised varieties of English. The fact that language is used for a specific purpose does not imply that it is a special form of the language, different in kind from other forms. (2) ESP is *not* a matter of science words and grammar for scientists, hotel words and grammar for hotel staff and so on. It is necessary to distinguish between what people actually do with the language and the range of knowledge and abilities which enables them to do it. (3) ESP is *not* different in kind from any other form of language teaching, in that it should be based in the first instance on principles of effective and efficient learning. Accordingly, ESP must be seen as an approach to language learning which is based on learner need in which all decisions concerning the content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning. (Hutchinson and Waters 1987:19)

Up to the mid 1970s, researchers and ESP practitioners worked relatively isolated from each other. They were engaged in many different corners of the world and each one of them developed new ideas or further developed existing ones. Only through personal exchanges could these people learn from the work of their colleagues. In this light it is not surprising, that during the mid 1970s the first ESP magazines appeared which helped to spread the new viewpoints and

developments. Soon a major sub-division of ESP, called EST – English for Science and Technology - emerged. EST was then again subdivided into English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP).

Among the problems of ESP in the late 1970s, Strevens (1977:160) lists a lack of materials, a shortage of suitably trained teachers and some course organisers who just re-label existing courses as Special Purpose courses. Selinker (1979:190) saw the major problem of ESP is the fact that teachers are confronted with the problem that they do not understand the scientific textbooks and professional articles which their students need to understand. His research yielded the results that professional assistance and team teaching with specialists in technical areas are necessary.

The 1970s generated new and innovative ways of teaching. This was necessary because most of the ESP practitioners had “restricted educational opportunity” and were forced to search for their own “ways out of providing maximum educational value” (Swales, 1988:188). What became clear was that within ESP teaching there needed to be a variety of methods and materials because not everything that works well for one situation or group of students works for others equally well. There are so many differences in the needs of students that there cannot be one solution to different local problems.

According to Brumfit (1980:107/108), an ESP course is “directly related to the purposes for which learners need English, purposes which are usually expressed in functional terms”. Therefore, ESP fits very well into the communicative teaching approach that has emerged in the 1980s. In the 1990s there was no dominating ESP movement but rather different approaches and different types of materials and methodologies. Business English had become one of the major strands of ESP. At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, there still was no valid overall definition of ESP.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991:304) identified three principal controversies that could be observed within ESP: (1) How specific

should ESP courses and texts be? (2) Should they focus upon one particular skill? and (3) Can an appropriate ESP methodology be developed? The first question concerns the problem of a wide-angle or a narrow-angle approach of ESP. This distinction has its roots in the very beginnings of ESP and there does not seem to be a single answer. What seems to be clear is – as so often – the truth lies somewhere in the middle. It is valuable to teach a wide-angle approach but as disciplines differ, it also makes sense to include subject specific materials in an ESP course. Ultimately, it is not really important to answer the question of narrow or wide angled. Bloor (1998:58) states that, international students "need access to more than one community". Therefore, a "successful ESP course will prepare each student for the variety of social roles he/she needs. The notion that teaching, say conversation skills for social events is "General English" which has no place in an ESP course, reflects an outdated view of ESP."

At the beginning of the new millennium, ESP has come of age. It is established as a discipline on its own but the ESP literature still has to struggle with a few shortcomings. Basturkmen (2002:29) lists strengths and weaknesses of the ESP literature:

Strengths of the ESP literature	- it provides an account of the various approaches to language description that can best inform LSP - it provides a theory of language use – genre analysis – in specific communities - it provides reports on course and materials designs and methodologies used in practice
Weaknesses of ESP literature	- the difference of learning ESP and General English - the ideals of langue and learning underlying typical course and materials designs and

	methodologies used in practice - the functions of LSP teaching and the role of LSP teaching in society.

Table 2: Strengths and weaknesses of ESP literature according to Basturkmen (2002:29)

Bloor and Bloor (1986) write that despite the rapid growth of ESP and LSP "there have been problems in establishing a theoretical basis which can (a) account for its success and (b) be extended to other types of language teaching. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:14) also found that a "truly valid approach to ESP must be based on an understanding of the processes of language learning." For them it was not enough to describe language. They were concerned with the use of the language and how learners acquire their special languages. For them the solution lay in a learning-centred approach to ESP.

The situation had changed around the middle of the decade but Bloor and Bloor (1986:2) state that "applied linguistic theory in some respects lags behind ESP practice". By then, ESP had been established as a successful approach to English Language Teaching. Apart from the number of ESP courses, teacher training programs and Business English courses as part of management training, this can be demonstrated in the number of publications. Swales (1985: xiv) lists a chart that illustrates the expansion of publications from 1972 till 1984:

Date	**Number of items**
1972	30
1975	60
1978	150
1981	400
1984 (estimate)	1300

Table 3: The expansion of ESP publications from 1972 till 1984 according to Swales (1985: xiv)

What is accepted is the viewpoint that ESP is not about a special language - it is about selecting the language that best meets the purposes of the learners. In the mid 1980s the distinction between English for Occupational Purposes and English for Academic Purposes was fairly well established. On the other hand EST no longer appeared very often because it was subsumed under the larger heading of ESP.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) were among the first who tried to place ESP in connection to theories of teaching and learning and thus develop an EPS theory of learning. So far theories of learning which dominated were behaviourism, mentalism (Chomsky), cognitivism, affective models of learning and of course Krashen's distinction between learning and acquisition. Hutchinson and Waters' ESP theory (1987:49-51) consists of a few statements:

- Individual items of knowledge have little significance on their own. They have to be connected into the network of existing knowledge.
- It is only the learner's existing knowledge that makes it possible to learn new items.
- Items of knowledge are not of equal significance.
- The learner has to develop strategies for solving the learning problems that will arise.
- The language must be seen as a coherent system.
- In order to establish the necessary links the learner must have motivation to learn.

Apart from these statements it is very important not to rely too heavily on only one theory as each theory has valuable elements to offer for the learning process.

2.1 ESP course design

The broad statement of the philosophy, purpose, design and incorporation of the entire teaching program is often referred to as the curriculum. Every curriculum

has its very unique views of linguistics, language teaching, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and educational theory.

Tyler was a pioneer in curriculum development. Throughout the 1950s his views revived curriculum studies. For Tyler (1971:1) four fundamental questions need to be answered in order to develop any curriculum or plan of instruction:

- What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
- What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
- How can these educational experiences be effectively organised?
- How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

Curriculum can mean, as Jarvis (2004:245) points out, “anything from the content of what is taught to the total provision of an educational institution; it can also refer to the subject matter of a particular course of study or even to the learning that is intended”. Richards (2001:2) sees curriculum development as a more comprehensive process than syllabus design. Curriculum development means all the processes that are used to determine the needs of learners, aims and objectives of a program, an appropriate syllabus, a course structure, teaching methods and materials and course evaluation. I follow Richard’s view of curriculum development. For me, curriculum is a synonym for course design.

Different researchers identify different elements when designing and maintaining a language course. But there seems to be agreement that no matter what approach to language curriculum one takes, certain components should be present in any curriculum. Whereas researchers do not agree on how people learn a second language, there is consensus that curriculum development processes comprise needs analysis, goal and objective setting, syllabus design (also known as selection and organisation of content), methodology, testing and evaluation. (Richards 1999:1). Graves (2000:3) adds the development of materials to this list. When designing a course there is no hierarchy in the processes and no sequence in their accomplishment.

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 22) there are three general factors that affect ESP course design:

- Who? Why? Where? When?
  The first step here is a needs analysis. It is important to find out details about the target group, the motivation of the learners and the learning environment.
- How?
  The “how” describes learning theories and the methodology behind the learning process.
- What?
  This area is the description of the language to be taught and the way the language system is broken down for the learners.

Basturkmen (2006) lists at least four different issues that have to be addressed in ESP course design. The first concerns the varieties of language and the question whether there is a common core of general or basic language that is the same in all areas of life and work. Or perhaps there is no common core as all languages are learnt in some context or another. When it comes to specificity the central question according to Hyland (2002:2) is, “Are there skills and features of language that are transferable across different disciplines and occupations, or should we focus on the texts, skills and language forms needed by particular learners?” Advocates of a general ESP approach argue that it is not possible to identify and teach specific varieties at all, that ESP is too difficult to learn for students with lower level proficiency of English and that there is not sufficient “specific language” to teach subject-specific courses. The second issue is needs analysis, which is the central element of adult course development. The third issue refers to the question of which syllabus to choose and the fourth refers to the focus (broad or narrow) of the course. When the focus is broad, a range of target events or a variety of genres is dealt with. Different skills can be addressed and the normal routine of a typical ESP course is changed. Courses which have

a narrow focus, on the other hand, are especially suitable when the learners' needs are limited (e.g. only one skill or genre).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987:65) acknowledge that even if there are an infinite number of course designs, three main types, language-centred, skills-centred and learning-centred can be identified.

The most common course design for ESP courses is the language-centred one. It starts out with the identification of a learner's target situation and the selection of theoretical views of language but the learner's sole purpose is to identify the target situation. It is static and inflexible and cannot respond to unexpected or developing influences. In a nutshell, it can be stated that the logical, straightforward, systematic approach does not take into account that learning does not follow such a straightforward road. The skills-centred course design "is a reaction both to the idea of specific registers of English as a basis for ESP and to the practical constraints on learning imposed by limited time and resources" (Hutchinson and Waters 1987:70). The third type of course design is the learning-centred approach, which not only deals with the language competence itself but also with the question of how someone acquires the competence. It puts the learner at the centre of every stage of the design process of the course. This is important insofar as needs of learners and resources vary with time.

Graves (2000:7) explains that course design is always "work in progress" which changes as soon as the course is underway. No teacher who wants to teach a meaningful course will be able to stick to his/her pre-designed course because you never know how the students will react, what they need exactly, whether they all understand the explanations and what alterations need to be made right on the spot. "Designing a language course is a work in progress in its whole, in its parts, and in its implementation" (Graves 2000:9).

What is more, every teacher who designs a course needs to have a clear understanding of how he/she views language, the social context of language, learners and learning and teaching. There is no single correct answer to how

these elements should be seen. Rather, they depend on the beliefs and experiences of teachers. In many cases ESP teachers are confronted with time pressure which often leads to intensive courses. Apart from instruction and a sound needs analysis, additional variables determine whether a course will be successful. As Richards (2001:90) puts it, “the contexts of language programs are diverse and the particular variables that come into play in a specific situation are often the key determinants of the success of a program”.

2.1.1 ESP needs analysis

In general, adults and even adolescents who attend a course have a clear understanding why they do so and what they want to learn. Even though all linguists agree that needs analysis is a central element in course design, there have been criticisms and issues around it (the institution itself as the main source of information, learners who are not clear on their needs are the source of information, objective needs are not necessarily the same as subjective ones, learners may need the meta-language to describe their needs, etc.). Even though different learners have different needs it is possible to teach ESP to a fairly homogenous group. Robinson (1980:12) states that “the usual ESP course is designed for a reasonable number of students with identical or nearly identical needs”. She (1980:13) defines an ESP course as “purposeful and aimed at the successful performance of occupational or educational roles. It is based on a rigorous analysis of students’ needs and should be tailor-made”.

Even though there are hardly any empirical studies on the effectiveness of ESP courses, I agree with Long (2005:1) that needs analysis is the “prerequisite for effective course design” and the key feature of any LSP course. Similarly, Jordan (1997:22) states that “needs analysis should be the starting point for devising syllabi, courses, materials and the kind of teaching and learning that takes place”. It tries to find out how learners make use of different sources so that ESP teaching can reflect what is happening in their everyday lives. Within the scope of a needs analysis, a language tutor tries to find out what to teach and how to teach it.

From very early on, ESP practitioners have been concerned with the language needs of their particular group of learners. To the present day, needs analysis plays an integral part in any ESP course design. In most cases this clearly distinguishes an ESP course from a General English course. A needs analysis typically identifies the gap between the current knowledge of the students and what they should know in the target situation. It can be designed to identify language skills or language tasks regularly performed in the target situation. For a situational analysis the following kind of questions need to be asked (Richards 1999:2):

- Who are the learners?
- What are the learners' goals and expectations?
- What learning styles do the learners prefer?
- How proficient are the teachers in the target language?
- Who are the teachers?
- What training and experience do the teachers have?
- What teaching approach do they favour?
- What do teachers expect of the program?
- What is the administrative context of the program?
- What constraints (time, budget, resources) are present?
- What kinds of tests and assessment measures are needed?

Without needs analysis, the language tutor does not know what to teach and how to teach it. A needs analysis can be undertaken at any phase of a course because according to Chambers (1980:27), needs can change even during a course due to factors such as shortage of funds from the sponsor, change of interest of the learners or errors in the original analysis. Richards (1992:2) notes that communicative needs should also be established. The questions for a communicative needs analysis would be:

- In what settings will the learners use the target language?
- What role relationships are involved?
- Which language modalities are involved (which of the four skills)?

- What types of communicative events and speech acts are involved?
- What level of proficiency is required?

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) distinguish between target needs and learning needs. Target needs consist of necessities (what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation), lacks (what does the learner know already and what does he lack) and wants (the learners' views about what to learn). Learning needs on the other hand identifies the route to getting to the goal of interacting in the target language.

What Chambers (1980) finds problematic is to determine who should be the main source of information of a needs analysis. Normally, there is a teaching organisation, a sponsor, a materials writer, a teacher and students involved in ESP courses. Every one of them has different needs and it is very important to consider all of them. It would be wrong to take the learners as the prime source of information because in most cases they are not aware or are not able to express linguistically what they need.

Needs analysis consists of the three different strands: target situation analysis (objective, perceived and product-oriented needs), learning situation analysis (subjective, felt and process-oriented needs) and present situation analysis (estimates strengths and weaknesses in language, skills, learning, experiences). Needs analysis according to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:125), encompasses eight steps. In the first step we need to gather information about the learners and the tasks and activities learners are/will be using English for (*target situation analysis* and *objective needs).* Personal information about the learners is also very important. These are factors which may affect the way they learn such as previous learning experiences, cultural information, reasons for attending the course and expectations of it, attitude to English (*wants, means, subjective needs*). A third step seeks to find English language information about the learners; what are their current skills and language use (*present situation analysis).* After these initial steps, it is then possible to assess the learner's lacks (the language gaps), his/her language learning information (*learning needs*),

knowledge of how language and skills are used in the target situation *(linguistic analysis, discourse analysis, genre analysis*), what is wanted from the course and information about the environment in which the course will be run (*means analysis).* Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:126) argue for dealing cautiously with results of needs analysis. They state that the findings from a needs analysis are not absolute but relative. Therefore, it is not possible to deduce one single, unique set of needs.

Drawing on Stufflebeam, Brown (1995:38-39) identifies four philosophies of needs assessment: discrepancy philosophy (needs are views as discrepancies between a desired performance from the students and what they are actually doing), democratic philosophy (a need is defined as any change that is desired by a majority of the group involved), analytic philosophy (a need is whatever the students will naturally learn next based on what is known about them and the learning process involved) and diagnostic philosophy (a need is anything that would prove harmful if it was missing).

Graves (2001:100) outlines the process of needs assessment as a cycle with the following decisions, actions and reflections:

1) Deciding what information to gather and why
2) Deciding the best way to gather it: when, how and from whom
3) Gathering the information
4) Interpreting the information
5) Acting on the information
6) Evaluating the effect and effectiveness of the action
7) (back to 1) Deciding on further or new information to gather

2.1.2 ESP Goals and objectives

The results of a needs analysis provide the basis for the definition of the goals and objectives of a language course. Goals are the formulation of the main purposes and desired outcomes of a course. They can be formulated in many different ways. As Graves (2000:75) puts it, “a goal states an aim that the course

will explicitly address in some way." It is important to state that goals should never be viewed as permanent. The teacher needs to be flexible and change them according to the performance of the students. According to Brown (1995:71-72) four points should be remembered when goals are derived from perceived needs:

- Goals are general statements of the program's purposes.
- Goals should usually focus on what the program hopes to accomplish in the future, and particularly on what the students should be able to do when they leave the program.
- Goals can serve as one basis for developing more precise and observable objectives.
- Goals should never be viewed as permanent, that is, they should never become set in cement.

Objectives, on the other hand, are more specific than goals and "statements about how the goals will be achieved" (Graves 2000:76). The defined goals are broken down into manageable units through the different objectives. Therefore, the objectives must always relate to the goals and be in a hierarchical relationship to them. Goals are defined in more general and objectives in more specific terms.

Brown (1995:78) summarises the steps involved in narrowing the perceptions of students' needs to realisable program goals and objectives as follows:

1. Examination of the needs of the students as presented in the needs analysis
2. Statement of the needs in terms of realisable goals
3. Narrowing of the scope of the goals
4. The smaller and more specific goals are laid down as objectives.

Objectives of a language program can be stated in different ways (Richards 1999:4-8). Programs can be defined in terms of behavioural objectives (describe competencies that students have to acquire and therefore tend to trivialise the

nature of second language acquisition), skills-based objectives (specification of micro skills), content-based objectives (specification in relation to content) and proficiency scales.

2.1.3 The syllabus

Nunan (1999:3) states, that “within the literature, there is some confusion over the terms “syllabus” and “curriculum”. It has different names in different regions of the world, too. In Europe we speak of curriculum but in the United States, for example, they refer to programmes instead. Dubin and Olshtain (1986:234-35) define curriculum as “a broad description of general goals by indicating an overall educational-cultural philosophy which applies across subjects together with a theoretical orientation to language and language learning with respect to the subject matter at hand.”

The specific items of a language that are taught, in other words, the selection and grading of the content of a language course, are called the syllabus. Nunan (1988:6) defines syllabus as “a statement of content which is used as the basis for planning courses of various kinds” and Dubin and Olshtain (1986:35) see it as “a more detailed and operational statement of teaching and learning elements which translates the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps leading towards more narrowly defined objectives”. Richards (2001:2) sees syllabus design as one – but not an identical – aspect of curriculum development.

According to Ur (2007:176-177), a syllabus is a public document with explicit objectives that consists of a comprehensive list and the components of this list can be ordered according to content or process items. Optional characteristics of a syllabus can be a time schedule, a particular approach or methodology and recommended materials. Generally speaking, syllabi can be divided into synthetic and analytic syllabi. Synthetic syllabi rely on “the learners’ assumed ability to learn a language in parts” (Long/Crookes 1992:28). Lexical, structural, notional, functional and often topical and situational syllabi fall into the category of synthetic syllabi. Synthetic syllabi have words, structures, notions or functions as the organisational unit. Analytic syllabi centre around the operations required

of the learner. They operate with samples of the target language which have not been structurally or lexically altered and present whole chunks of the L2. Examples of analytic syllabi are: procedural, process and task syllabi.

Every course mirrors the view of its designer as most ESP courses are limited in time and scope. Every syllabus, therefore, encompasses what its designer considers most important for the learners. So, as Basturkmen (2006:22) puts it, “the selection of course content reflects our ideas of language learning”. Syllabus design tries to find out “what” of a language should be taught. The selection of content most often concerns vocabulary and grammar. It is not surprising that vocabulary selection and grammar selection laid the foundations for syllabus design in language teaching (Richards 2001:4). The grammatical syllabus did not include non-grammatical features of the language. In a traditional approach the teacher first presented the grammatical topic, then the students needed to do drills and later on practiced the grammatical topic in context. Grammatical syllabi are still very widely used. They assume that a language consists of a finite set of rules which can be learnt one after the other and once acquired they can be used in communication. One of the main criticisms of such structural syllabi is the fact that they only focus on grammar as the single aspect of language.

During the 1960s, syllabi were of structural nature. Researchers analysed ESP texts by, for example, counting the number of sentences of different lengths, or number of clauses per sentence or the occurrence of tenses or modal verbs. Widdowson (1979:38) expressed the procedures of a structural syllabus as follows: “Conduct a statistical survey on a sample of English of the kind one wishes to teach and establish the relative frequency of occurrence of the lexical and syntactic units in it, then devise language teaching materials which will give relative weighting to these linguistic elements in accordance with their importance as measured by frequency.” Even though this statistical method did not really help teachers much, it yielded evidence for the difference between Scientific English and General English. In 1965 the first ESP textbook, “The Structure of Technical English”, by A. J. Herbert was published. In light of the

structural approach, Herbert highlighted the typical sentence patterns and isolated certain aspects of technical vocabulary.

In the 1970s, the functional-notional syllabus started to replace the grammatical syllabus. Functions describe the social behaviour of the speaker or writer (apologising, thanking, etc.) whereas notions "reflect the way in which the human mind thinks …(frequency, duration, gender, number, location, quantity, quality, etc.) (Hutchinson and Waters 1987:31). Modern teaching had to be communicative. The difference between the structural and the notional syllabus lies in the description of the language content. The structural syllabus describes it in formal terms whereas the notional syllabus defines the language content in functional terms. But, as Widdowson (1979:247) notes, "in both cases the essential design is an inventory of language units in isolation and in abstraction". The notional syllabus, therefore, cannot account for communicative teaching units. It is more communicative than the structural syllabus but is also about elements of discourse and not about discourse itself. Both syllabi do not take the language processing ability of the learner into account.

In the 1980s the Common Core hypothesis (all varieties of language have a common grammatical system) which is central to applied linguistics, found its way into the field of ESP. It had effects on the construction of syllabi and the selection of teaching materials. For Leech and Svartvik (1975 in Bloor and Bloor 1986:17), the Common Core "consists of certain words and sentences that can be used "safely" in all situations". But as the Common Core does not exist as a language variety and is just an idealisation, it is according to Bloor and Bloor (1986:19), absolutely possible to acquire the Common Core also from a special variety. Which means that students, for example, of English for Business or English for Engineering will also be able to acquire the core of the language. Furthermore, they state that learners have to be exposed to specific language. Only in this way can they learn the grammatical and lexical dependencies that are found in specialised areas of language. For Robinson (1991:22), the common core "consists of the basic patterns of word, phrase and clause (or sentence)

construction in English. Where one variety of English will differ from another is in the frequency of use of these different structural possibilities".

Following Stern, Graves (2000:52-53) identifies the three categories: *focus on language*, *focus on learning and learner* and *focus on social context* to conceptualise context. All of these foci form the basis of a specific kind of syllabus. *Focus on language* includes: linguistic skills (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary), situations (contexts in which language is used), topics/themes (what we talk about), communicative functions (what do we use language for), competencies (language and behaviour to perform certain tasks), tasks (what we accomplish with language), content (subject matter other than language), speaking, listening, reading and writing (the "four skills") and genre (texts that fulfil a certain purpose within a social setting). *Focus on learning and the learner* includes: affective goals (attitudes towards the learning process and culture), interpersonal skills (interaction with others) and learning strategies (how do people learn a language). *Focus on social context* includes: sociolinguistic skills (using appropriate language), socio-cultural skills (understanding cultural norms) and socio-political skills (learning to critique).

Richards (2001:153-165) lists the following syllabus frameworks for general English courses which can be seen as a summary of the historical development and adoption of syllabi also in the field of ESP. What all these syllabi have in common is that they incorporate what is known about second language learning. In contrast, lexical, structural, notional, functional and relational syllabi concentrate on an analysis of language and language use. The problem with these syllabi is that they neither incorporate authentic L2 language nor research findings on L2 learning. Furthermore, they view the target language in a rather static way. In contrast, synthetic syllabi try to incorporate as much authentic language as possible as well as separate linguistic forms in order to foster target like mastery of them.

Grammatical or structural	It is organised around grammatical items. The

syllabus	problem is that grammatically complex structures are not necessarily difficult to learn and grammatically simple structures are not necessarily easy to learn. Most grammatical syllabi assume that "language consists of a finite set of rules which can be combined in various ways to make meaning. It is further assumed that these rules can be learnt one by one." (Nunan 1999:29). It was criticised because it only takes one aspect of language into account
Lexical syllabus	Identifies a target vocabulary to be taught (e.g. the first 1000 words)
Functional syllabus	Organised around communicative functions (e.g. requesting, complaining, agreeing, etc.) and is an alternative to a grammatical syllabus. Functions are the communicative purposes for which language is used and notions are the meanings we express through language (Nunan 1999:35). Functional-notional syllabi were criticised on similar grounds as grammatical ones. It was pointed out that they, too, do not really reflect the way languages are learnt. Like grammatical syllabi the content was graded.
Situational syllabus	Organised around the language needed for different situations or settings in which particular communicative acts occur.
Topical or content-based syllabus	Organised around themes, topics or other units of content.
Competency-based syllabus	Based on specification of the competencies learners need to master in specific situations or activities.

Skills syllabus	Organised around the four skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking and various micro skills.
Task-based syllabus	Organised around tasks that need to be performed in the target language; the predominant type of syllabus in ESP.
Text-based syllabus	Built around texts and examples of discourse.
Integrated syllabus	No syllabus can strictly follow exclusively any of the described syllabi. In language courses all of the above foci need to be taken into account so course designers will use a combination depending on the types of content that need to be addressed.

Table 4: Syllabus frameworks for general English courses according to Richards (2001:153-165)

Over the last few years functional analysis of language has largely influenced the development of language syllabi, teaching materials and teaching methodology. Functional analysis is interdisciplinary in nature and draws on linguistics, philosophy, anthropology, sociology and psychology. It is concerned with the setting in which language is used, speakers of the language and speaking as a purposeful activity.

2.1.4 Teaching methods

Having determined what should be learnt and that instruction is good for learning, a new question now arises: “How should this instruction be conducted?”. Teachers use very different methods of teaching (Richards 2001:3). When it comes to ESP methodology, Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991:305) clearly state that they believe “that ESP requires methodologies that are specialized or unique”. The need for a specific ESP methodology arises simply out of the nature of the field. Highly specialised courses call for different methodologies than General English courses for which a plethora of material already exist. ESP did not use methodology that was different from General English teaching. Rather,

Brumfit (1980:106) argues that “seeds of ESP were present in all good teaching”. What was new, however, was the requirement of a certain flexibility of an ESP course. It was no longer sufficient to rely on only one textbook. ESP teachers had to teach modular courses with a variety of materials. ESP methodology relied on communicative and functional approaches to language teaching which developed alongside ESP.

Historically, the first method was the Grammar-Translation Method which dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s. It was largely based on the study of Latin. Studying a language meant studying its literature and translating texts. Grammar rules were analysed, the main focus was on reading and writing and the student’s native language was the medium of instruction. In the mid 19th century, due to increased trade within Europe, there was a need for oral language proficiency. Linguists introduced phonetic training, conversational phrases and idioms. Grammar was taught inductively and new meanings were taught through establishing associations within the target language rather than establishing associations with the native language (Richards and Rodgers 2004:9). At the turn of the century the Direct Method, whose principles are still followed in Berlitz schools, became popular. It emphasised the similarities between naturalistic first language learning and classroom foreign language learning. Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language and only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught. Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures, abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas. Furthermore, correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized. (Richards and Rodgers 2004:12). In the 1920s the Direct Method became less popular but was modified into methods that combined some of its elements with more controlled grammar-based activities and marked the beginning of the “methods era”. From the 1950s to the 1980s many different methods and approaches of language teaching emerged.

The Oral Approach or Situational Language Teaching, was developed by British applied linguists from the 1930s to the 1960s. Many textbooks of today are still based on this approach. According to Richards and Rogers (2004:39) its main characteristics were: (1) language teaching begins with the spoken language. Material is taught orally before it is presented in written form, (2) the target language is the language of the classroom, (3) new language points are introduced and practiced situationally (cf. hence the term “Situational Language Teaching”), (4) vocabulary selection procedures are followed to ensure that an essential general service vocabulary is covered, (5) simple grammar forms should be taught before complex ones and (6) reading and writing are introduced once a sufficient lexical and grammatical basis is established.

Increased attention given to foreign language teaching in the United States at the end of the 1950s lead to the emergence of the Audio-lingual Method. Its basis was structural linguistics which had developed as a reaction to traditional grammar as well as behaviourism with its crucial elements, stimulus, response and reinforcement. Foreign language learning was seen as a process of mechanical habit formation and therefore the memorisation and performance of pattern drills became popular. Language items were presented first in spoken form. Only after the students completed pattern drills were they exposed to rules. Culture was seen as an important element in language teaching and thus the cultural system of the target language was introduced. With the emergence of new learning theories, behaviourism and with it the Audio-lingual Method, fell out of fashion in the 1960s. Around the middle of the 1970s new teaching and learning methods appeared which also changed the role of the language teacher. This was due to the observation that there was a huge gap between classroom discourse and target discourse.

In the 1970s and 1980s a variety of alternative teaching methods were developed. Among them was the Total Physical Response (TPR) method which attempted to teach language through physical activity. The TPR method is most efficient when used alongside other approaches of teaching. A method that

draws heavily on Situational Language Teaching and the Audio-lingual Method is the Silent Way. Its innovation is the responsibility placed on the learners (the teacher should speak as little as possible) to figure out their hypothesis about the second language. During the same period teaching methods such as project work or team-teaching emerged which were used in ESP courses.

There was a major paradigm shift in the 20th century. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) became the buzzword of the educational world and still guides language teaching of today. Central to this approach is the notion that learners learn a language in order to communicate; their goal is authentic and meaningful communication. It is an approach rather than a method. In this approach learners learn a language through using it to communicate. Authentic and meaningful communication should be the goal of classroom activities. Communication should be fluent and involves the integration of different language skills as well as trial and error (Richards and Rogers 2004:172). Task-based language teaching can be seen as a logical development of Communicative Language Teaching. It involves real communication and meaningful tasks because it assumes that language which the learner considers meaningful supports the learning process. If possible, authentic and meaningful tasks should be supported by authentic materials which can be found, for example, in newspapers, television broadcasts or in the Internet. As a follow-on, the Natural Approach emerged which was largely supported by Krashen. It is based on interpretation of how learners acquire a first and a second language in a natural and non-formal setting. There is a focus on comprehension and meaningful communication and activities rather than production of grammatically correct sentences. Phillips and Shettlesworth (1978 in Swales 1988) find it necessary to create “the conditions for activities which encourage the student to transfer the language taught in the classroom to use in communicative situations”. The learner became more important in the learning process as it was acknowledged that he/she is in many cases the subject specialist. Furthermore, the potential of group work (e.g. differential pacing and handling of individual language problems, possibility to select different texts for different groups to foster specialisation) was seen. Since the

1980s Content-Based Instruction has been used in a variety of ESP settings. As the name suggests, the teaching is centred on a certain content that is of interest for the learners. The activities are specific to the subject taught and thus the students are encouraged to think and learn through the target language. The problematic aspect is that most teachers are not trained to teach a content subject. The highest principle is always that the content taught is selected according to the learners' needs.

As a result of the unfinished story of learning theories, a great variety of teaching methods and approaches exist. Allen and Harley (1992:14) state that, "no single method has been sufficient in itself to deal with the great variety of circumstances, types of learners, and levels of instruction that constitute second language pedagogy". As a consequence, it is once more up to every single individual teacher to choose from this large pool of resources the best methods for the class, a group of students or individual students. All methods that have been described so far are traditionally used in General English courses. According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:187), there exists no? a particular ESP methodology which is different from General English courses because the learners bring conscious and latent specialist knowledge as well as cognitive and learning processes that are particular to their specialised field. Tutors in an ESP course always try to use tasks and activities that reflect the learners' specialist world.

2.1.5 The ESP tutor

The role of the ESP tutor is not an easy one. As there are so many different ESP courses around the world, it is impossible to describe one single model for the ESP tutor. What most ESP teachers have in common, however, is their training. They are initially trained as teachers for General English courses and the majority shares the fear of not being able to cope with the students' specialist knowledge. The central question in this context is how much specialist knowledge an ESP tutor needs to have. It cannot be answered in a straightforward manner, but according to Ferguson (1997:80-81) different

variables have to be considered. What is clear, though, is that the teacher should have an interest in the students' specialist area. It is important to determine the knowledge of the students (are they "experts" or apprentices in the discipline), the needs of the student, the size of the class, the tutor's role in the classroom and his/her preferred methodology, the degree of specialisation of the texts and materials used on the course and the degree of language proficiency of the students individually and as a class.

What clearly distinguishes an ESP teacher from a General English teacher is the fact that the ESP tutor is, in most cases, also the designer of the course and the course materials, but ESP tutors do not need to use a new approach in teaching ESP. Rather, they need to be very flexible and open to taking risks. ESP classes, in most cases, work differently to General English classes in which the teacher presents the content in one form or other. An ESP tutor needs to be prepared that he/she only provides the students with the means to tackle a problem or an activity. This is the most problematic point for most ESP tutors but as Graves (1996:5) notes, "there is no set procedure to follow that will guarantee a successful course because each teacher and each teacher's situation is different." The students themselves may be the actual subject experts and only through cooperation can the teaching process work. Dudley-Evans (1997:61) describes the ESP tutor as someone equipped "to have the skills and sense of adventure of the jazz musician improvising around a melody or a chord sequence." What is more, Hutchinson and Waters (1987:160) make the situation of an ESP teacher very clear when they state that, "ESP teachers cannot turn to linguistics and psychology in the hope of finding ready-made, straightforward answers to the problems that they will meet." It is therefore essential to be familiar with the options for course planning that are available in order to design and teach a course which best suits the needs of the particular group of specialised learners.

According to Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:13), LSP practitioners have, among others, the roles of teachers, course designers and material providers.

The basic role of every tutor is to be a teacher. Contrary to General English courses, the tutor of an ESP course is not always the one who “knows more” than his/her students. The ESP students nearly always know more about the content than their tutor. Therefore, these tutors need to be very flexible and willing to listen to their students. They need to have an interest in the activities their students are involved in. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:189) state that students do not expect their teachers to have specialist knowledge and the ESP tutor is the one who needs to acknowledge and use the learners’ greater knowledge of the carrier content. The students only expect their tutors to have the knowledge of how language is used in their domain.

2.1.6 ESP materials

For the majority of General English courses, it is not necessary for the teachers to develop new materials as there are countless textbooks on offer to choose from. The situation is totally different for most ESP courses. Many are so specific that teachers need to develop materials themselves. According to Graves (2000:150), “materials development means creating, choosing or adapting, and organizing materials and activities so that students can achieve the objectives that will help them reach the goals of the course”. Like the overall design of a course, materials development is also an expression of the teacher’s beliefs about teaching and learning languages.

For most ESP courses, it is not possible to just choose from the myriad of course books as they mostly do not meet the needs of the particular group of learners. Even if certain course books can be used, ESP teachers nearly always complement them with materials they develop on their own. Generally speaking, materials for an ESP course can be adopted, adapted or specially prepared for the program. Richards (1999:15) notes that good materials are an important part of the teaching process. Such materials are used to define instructional objectives, setting learning tasks, informing learners of what tasks they have to perform and providing guidance and feedback on performance.

When it comes to the production of ESP materials, register analysis was the main method in the early years of ESP. Register analysis is based on the assumption that there is a restricted language or register when it comes to highly specialised language courses. Grammatical and lexical features of different registers (e.g. business letters, academic textbooks, technical texts, etc.) were identified and were used as the basis for teaching a language course. This process was known as “lexicostatistics”. Due to different restrictions in time or money, a selection and reduction of language items to be taught has to be made. The greatest problem with register analysis is the fact that no indication can be made as to the relation of the isolated linguistic elements in actual discourse. Therefore, it has little value for teaching. As at the beginning of the 1980s, there was hardly any research in register analysis it was virtually impossible for materials designers to base their material on it. Register analysis was more or less discarded on the grounds that “there is no significant way in which the language of science differs from any other kind of language” (Coffey 1984:4-5) and that it only put emphasis on items at the sentence level and thus on the surface features. With the emergence of computers, there has been a renewed interest in register analysis. It is now possible to analyse large corpora of texts as well as to state in what relationships sentence elements occur.

After register analysis, there came attempts to apply discourse analysis to ESP courses which put emphasis to the whole written or spoken text. The focus was not on the sentence level any more but on the level above the sentence. The central question was, “How are sentences and utterances combined in order to produce meaning?” Discourse analysis is primarily concerned with spoken language and covers communicative purposes. Instead of reporting formal features, new discourse approaches were more interested in the functional aspect of language use and the meaning between sentences. Thus, the context of a sentence became more and more important.

The most famous advocate for this communicative approach in the 1970s was Widdowson. For him, it was not enough to study isolated sentences. “…the

language should be represented in such a way as to reveal its character as communication." (Allen and Widdowson, 1974, in Swales 1988:75). Furthermore, he discarded the approach to varieties or registers of Scientific English. In order to be able to develop teaching materials, researchers had to analyse the communicative situation particular learners are in. Through needs analysis the target situations of the learners were identified and after that the linguistic features that appeared in that situation were analysed. By the end of the decade, the need of the learners was the most important element in the development of a course. Discourse analysis can be seen as overlapping with genre analysis. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:87) even see genre analysis as part of discourse analysis.

Swales (1990) was the first to develop an approach to language description which was taken over by the whole ESP field. His analysis of genres in specific discourse communities was originally undertaken for English for Academic Purposes. Genre analysis refers primarily to the written communication of social groups. This is not surprising, as it has its roots in English for Academic Purposes and in the academic world scholars use papers, reviews, conference papers and the like to communicate with peers. A genre is a class of language use and communicative events that is found in specific discourse communities. Such a class needs to be a communicative event in which language plays an essential role. According to Swales (1990:24-27), a discourse community has six defining characteristics. It has a broadly agreed set of common public goals and mechanisms of intercommunication among its members, uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback, utilises and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims, has acquired some specific lexis and has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discourse expertise. Even though the concept of discourse community can be very useful, it can be difficult to produce real examples of discourse communities (Dudley-Evans/St John 1998:92). Only shared communicative purposes can turn different communicative events into genres. There is a considerable difference among genres. Genres are for

example recipes or – more complex – political speeches (Swales 1990:62). An example of genre from an academic setting would be a research article or a seminar paper.

Taking into account, for example, data from structuration theory, rhetorical studies or activity theory, Berkenkotter and Huckin (1993:478) have developed five principles that constitute a theoretical framework for genre. Genres possess (1) dynamism (they change over time in response to the users' needs), (2) situatedness (speech is embedded in cultural, communicative activities), (3) form and content (what content is appropriate to a particular purpose in a particular situation at a particular point in time),(4) duality of structure (structures are constituted and reproduced in different contexts) and (5) community ownership (genre conventions signal the norms, epistemology, ideology, and social ontology of a discourse community).

What became very fashionable within the ESP movement was the use of authentic materials. Whether authentic (and therefore often difficult) or simplified texts and materials worked better with students was, and still is, a very debatable issue. Practitioners thought it was important for students to be able to perform certain real-life operations. Therefore, they used authentic activities and tasks to be performed in the ESP classroom. In addition, laboratories and workshops came into fashion. Authentic materials may cause problems, especially with beginners, as they do not use only the language that the learners have already learnt. Teachers can choose from a continuum with pedagogically prepared and authentic materials at the two ends. Similarly tasks and activities can be placed on a continuum with pedagogical and real world at each end. Authentic materials were being questioned by Hutchinson and Waters (in Swales 1985:177). They posed the question whether subject specific materials were the best and most motivating way. To teach the "underlying competence" is much more important than to make them learn superficial aspects of particular situations. Hutchinson and Waters (in Swales 1985:178) warn that we should not confuse "what the

students are expected to cope with" with "what the students require in order to cope".

2.1.7 ESP testing and assessment

An important question when it comes to ESP courses is whether testing is necessary and if so, what it should look like. There are a number of international language exams that test overall English proficiency. Douglas (2000) argues that these tests are not suitable for ESP course situations. Performance varies greatly depending on the context and the test task. Topics that are relevant to the field the language learners are working or studying in yield a higher performance in tests, especially when the tasks of the test content are similar to the target language use situation. Furthermore, students need to control the technical or specific language of their field. They need to be able to talk in precise terms about their field and this is exactly what is tested in LSP tests.

Douglas (2000:19) gives the following definition of specific purpose language test:

> *A specific purpose language test is one in which test content and methods are derived from an analysis of a specific purpose target language use situation, so that test tasks and content are authentically representative of tasks in the target situation, allowing for an interaction between the test taker's language ability and specific purpose content knowledge, on the one hand, and the test tasks on the other. Such a test allows us to make inferences about a test taker's capacity to use language in the specific purpose domain.*

What we test are observed performances under controlled conditions. It is important to note that an incorrectly completed test task does not automatically mean a lack of communicative competence. It could just mean that the test developer set an impossible situation or that the contrary is true. The task could have been correctly solved not because the student has good communicative competence but because he/she drew on other types of knowledge.

In the context of testing we need to distinguish between language ability and other individual characteristics. Bachman and Palmer (1996:67) describe

language ability as involving the two components language knowledge (organisational knowledge consisting of grammatical and textual knowledge) and strategic competence (consisting of goal setting, assessment and planning). Another characteristic is background knowledge, which needs to be taken into account when grading a test.

As assessment does not play a major role in football clubs and academies, I refer the interested reader to Douglas (2000) and Bachman and Palmer (1996).

3 Individual Learners' Differences

Second language acquisition research is a relatively new field which emerged as a discipline in the 1970s. Since the beginning of second language learning research, researchers have not and still do not agree on how people learn a language. There seems to be disagreement about nearly every factor involved in learning a second language. For example, is not really clear how different people react to different teaching methods or whether there is an age factor in learning. Researchers even disagree on how to build a learning theory. What is clear and undisputed is that learning a second language is a difficult process which encompasses a multitude of aspects. It means becoming familiar not only with a new language but also with a new culture and a new way of acting and thinking. Over the last five decades it has become apparent that linguistic, psychological and socio-cultural factors are involved when learning a second language. Up to now all aspects of second language acquisition that have been discussed were seen in relation to "the learner". Learners, however, are by no means the same and even within homogenous learner groups, many individual differences can be identified. It is therefore important to investigate whether some learners attain native-like language proficiency while others do not. To give answers to this question many different aspects need to be looked at.

3.1 Age and second language acquisition

The obvious difference between first and second language acquisition is the age of the learners. Learners of a first language are children who do not possess knowledge of a previous learnt language. Adult L2 learners have a different initial state of mind because they already know a language. Another difference lies in the maturity of the L2 learner. Not only has the L2 already acquired a language but he/she also finished his or her cognitive development. This means that adults do not need to learn for example when to switch speaking style or when to whisper etc. They have, as Cook (2008:15) states, "whatever advantages that age confers in terms of working memory, conceptual and social development,

command of speech styles, and so on." A further advantage of adults is their literacy, which changes their thinking.

Saville-Troike (2006:82) summarises the age differences in second language learning abilities of adults and children:

Younger advantage	***Older advantage***
Brain plasticity	*Learning capability*
Not analytical	*Analytic ability*
Fewer inhibitions (usually)	*Pragmatic skills*
Weaker group identity	*Greater knowledge of L1*
Simplified input more likely	*Real-world knowledge*

Table 5: Age differences in second language learning abilities

It is a common belief that young children learn an L2 faster and better than adults but there has been much controversy around this assumption. Some researchers believe that people show the same linguistic results whether they start learning the L2 as a child or as an adult. Others claim that adults are the better L2 learners because they show better results at the beginning. Studies in the field cannot solve these problems of controversy as they show very mixed results.

Many findings show that only younger children reach native-like competence (also with regards to phonetics and accent). This led Lenneberg (1967) to the assumption that there is a critical period for learning a language. This critical period is during puberty when biological changes occur. Language that is learnt after this critical period will never be native-like. Lamendella (1977 in Marinova-Todd et. al 2000:10) introduced the term "sensitive period" instead of "critical period" to account for the fact that language learning may be easier during childhood but not impossible for adults. Even though it is quite easy to assume a critical period, it is probably the easy way out. When comparing language results of children and adults one does need to take various factors such as motivation,

time and energy and the environment into account. Most adult learners who do not reach native-like status may only be unmotivated, lack the time and energy to study or are not supported by their environments. Marionova-Todd et al. (2000) argue that there has been a mis-emphasis in research. Researchers have rarely used successful adults who invest time and energy in SLA, who are highly motivated and have supportive environments as cases of information. For them a critical period for language learning does not exist. Age is an influential factor in language learning only because it is associated with social, psychological, educational and other factors that affect L2 proficiency.

Many researchers agree and studies show that age-related differences in the acquisition of an L2 exist. Explanations vary considerably and at least four causes can be identified (Larsen-Freeman/Long:1991):

Social-psychological explanation: Adult learners are more “attached” to their mother tongue than children and are afraid that they lose their identity as a speaker of this L1 if they adopt a native-like use of the L2. Children have not formed these tight bonds to a particular L1 and deal with an L2 in a more neutral way.

Cognitive explanation: Adults and children possess different cognitive skills and abilities. Children are able to use their language acquisition device while adults use abstract thinking skills in learning an L2.

Input explanation: Children receive better input than adults. They get input that always has a connection to the “here and now”. Furthermore, children are mostly exposed to more input than adults because they play with native-speaking peers. Adults are usually confronted with more complex and abstract input which is more difficult to process.

Neurological explanation: There are two positions regarding neurological explanations. One assumes that the two halves of the brain are specialised for different functions around puberty. This process is called lateralisation. Before puberty the brain is more plastic and thus transfer of a function from one

hemisphere to the other is possible. The second position assumes that second language abilities decline when this neurological plasticity declines.

Singleton and Ryan (2004) summarised the propositions that have been made concerning the maturational factor in second language acquisition as follows. For all of them positive and negative evidence exists which makes it difficult to answer the “age-question” satisfactorily.

- L2 learners whose exposure to the L2 begins in childhood are globally more efficient and successful than older learners.
- L2 learners whose exposure to the L2 begins in adolescence/early adulthood are globally more efficient and successful than younger learners.
- L2 learners whose exposure to the L2 begins in childhood are more efficient and successful than older learners only in some respects.
- Adolescent/adult L2 learners are initially more efficient, but in the long run the younger a learner is when the L2 acquisition process begins, the more successful the outcome of that process will be.
- After a certain maturational point the L2 learning process changes qualitatively.

Singleton and Ryan (2004:226) state in their concluding remarks that “what is quite clear from the foregoing discussion is that there are very few simple truths concerning the role of age in language acquisition”. There does not seem to be “the” age but rather “a range of age factors” (Singleton 2001:85) when we want to solve the question when second languages are best learnt.

3.1.1 Adults as language learners

The available definitions of “adult learner” are not consistent. At its simplest, adulthood may be defined in terms of age. In England, for example, people are assumed to become adults at 18 years old, when they get receive the right to vote. The problem with this definition is that some aspects of adulthood may be exercised before reaching 18 years, such as marriage, full-time employment and

taxation. On the other hand people with disabilities may never achieve or be allowed full adult status. The age of maturity also varies from country to country. In industrialised countries an intermediary stage between childhood and adulthood is recognised: adolescents, youths or teenagers (Rogers 1996 in Tight 2004:14-15). Paterson (1979 in Tight 2004:15) defines adulthood as "an ethical status resting on the presumption of various moral and personal qualities." Jarvis (2004:67) states that "adulthood is reached when individuals are treated by others as if they are socially mature and when they consider themselves to have achieved this status". Knowles et al. (2005:64) describe adulthood through four definitions: (1) biological definition (we become adults when we reach the age at which we can reproduce), (2) legal definition (we become adults when we reach the age at which the law says we can vote, get a driver's licence, marry without consent, and the like), (3) social definition (we become adults when we start performing adult roles, such as the role of full-time worker, spouse, parent, voting citizen, and the like) and (4) psychological definition (we become adults when we arrive at a self-concept of being responsible for our own lives). Fenwick and Tennant (2004) have a very broad understanding of adulthood. There are so many differences among people and their experiences that it is impossible to define "the adult learner". Everybody has their unique cultural, political, physical and social dynamics so perhaps the category "adult education" is not as distinct as researchers thought it to be a few years ago.

What seems to be clear, however, is the fact that adults learn most effectively when they learn in an informal and self-directed environment (c.f. Knowles' psychological definition). They direct their own learning and the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than somebody who tells them exactly what to do.

3.1.2 Adolescent language learners

Adolescence, according to Crawford (2008:26), is "the transitional time between late childhood and young adulthood and is characterized by rapid changes in physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development". Feldman (2008:5) defines it as "the developmental stage that lies between childhood and

adulthood". Even though these two definitions sound quite clear-cut they are everything but as it is impossible to draw an exact line between childhood and adulthood. Roughly speaking this period stretches from 10 to 20 years of age and has changed significantly over the years. Feldman (2008) suggests thinking of adolescence as the teenage years. As this is quite a long time span some researchers divide adolescence into the three stages: early adolescence (10 to 13 years), middle adolescence (14 to 17) and late adolescence (18 to 22). These categories made by US researchers coincide with the US school system and might be slightly different for other countries.

Without doubt adolescence is a phase of transition and development on various levels. Young people undergo significant physical and cognitive development. Furthermore their personality is shaped and they try to find their place in society. Adolescence is the period when puberty sets in. Significant changes in the body occur which are triggered by the endocrine system (the body's communication network that operates via the bloodstream). These changes not only influence the sexual organs but also the nervous system and brain development. Brain lateralisation (brain functions are either located more in the right or more in the left brain hemisphere) is also developed during adolescence. Crawford (2008:26) states that adolescence „is a developmental time of erratic physical growth, social exploration, and unfolding intellectual capacity". This capacity enables adolescents to think abstractly and in relative terms. What is interesting about brain development is the significant implications it brings about. Activities of adolescents have a lasting effect for the rest of their lives. Their hobbies and interests may cause a specialisation of the brain in certain functions. Passive adolescents (e.g. those, who mainly watch TV) risk an opportunity to stimulate brain growth. Scientists do not agree on the way the brain develops. What is clear, however, is the fact *that* the adolescent brain undergoes some significant changes. Different scientists looked at cognitive development from various angles. Piaget was one of the first to study cognitive processes in relation to age change. Another perspective when considering cognitive development is information-processing. Proponents of this approach suggest that adolescents'

mental abilities do not grow in certain stages but grow gradually and continuously. Here rather quantitative advances, such as to perceive, understand and remember information or to be able to handle increasingly complex problems define cognitive development. Vygotsky(1997) proposed yet another way of looking at cognitive development. For him the focus is on the individual's social and cultural world. Central for his theory are the social aspects of development and learning. He does not propose specific stages of development.

No matter which line of thought one follows it is very clear that there is some kind of development in the human intellect. With every phase or gradual growth children and adolescents have different needs which have to be met by parents and teachers. When it comes to adolescent learning, Crawford (2008:27-28) lists the following six developmental needs:

Personal connection: Adolescents need to connect learning with prior knowledge, personal experience and interests, and mode of learning.

Appropriate intellectual challenge: Adolescents need to be cognitively engaged within the reach of their capabilities.

Emotional engagement: Adolescents need to be motivated by relevant experiences that intrigue, activate their emotions, and actively involve them physically, intellectually, and socially.

Purposeful social interaction: Adolescents need guided and meaningful collaboration with peers and others in the learning community.

Meta-cognitive development: Adolescents are developing the capacity to think about, reflect on, and take ownership of their own learning. They need opportunities to acquire the cognitive and meta-cognitive skills and strategies to manage their learning and to extend it to other learning situations in and beyond the school.

Supportive learning environment: Adolescents need a safe, structured, and supportive learning space where they can express and shape ideas, articulate

developing thinking without fear of embarrassment, and feel included, accepted, and valued.

3.2 Aptitude

Aptitude describes the fact that some learners learn an L2 quicker and thus have a better “aptitude“ than others. Aptitude is multidimensional and according to Carroll (in Ellis 2008:167), consists of four independent abilities: the ability to process input and to retain associations between different sounds and symbols (phonetic coding ability), the ability to recognise grammatical functions and formulate rules (grammatical sensitivity), the ability to learn associations between sounds and meanings quickly and to retain these associations (rote learning ability for foreign language materials) and the ability to induce the rules of language samples (inductive language learning ability).

An additional component of aptitude is Working Memory (WM) which is “an active system in which information is stored and manipulated and which is required for complex tasks like language comprehension” (De Bot 2005:70). Even though aptitude and intelligence are closely linked, they do not seem to be the same. Aptitude can predict differential success in L2 learning in naturalistic as well as in formal settings but is just one of many factors that influence L2 proficiency. Language learners do not need to be strong in all components of aptitude to be successful.

3.3 Motivation

Without doubt, motivation and a positive attitude towards the target language lead to successful second language learning. Wagner and Lambert (1972 in Lightbown and Spada 1999:56) have coined the terms *integrative motivation* (language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment) and *instrumental motivation* (language learning to reach more immediate or practical goals). Initially integrative motivation was considered better for effective language learning but this has been challenged over the years. Research up to the 1990s saw motivation primarily as a relatively stable learner trait and a function of the

learner's social perceptions of the L2 and its speakers, as reflected by various language attitudes; generalised attitudes toward the L2 learning situation, such as the appraisal of the course or the teacher and interethnic contact and the resulting degree of linguistic self-confidence (Dörnyei 2001:44).

Since the 1990s, different cognitive and situation-specific variables have been added to the concept of motivation. Dörnyei (2001:49-52) identifies new motivational themes that have received attention in the last years. Among them are teacher motivation, motivation and learning strategy use, demotivation, willingness to communicate and motivating language learners. Furthermore, there exist different views and perspectives on motivation. One is social motivation which deals with the question of how social contexts affect the learning process. Motivation thus can stem from the socio-cultural environment and not only from the individual learner. The process-oriented perspective investigates the temporal dimension of motivation – How does the motivational process present itself over time? This perspective assumes that a learner's motivation is not constant but undergoes changes over the course of the learning process. Schumann (2001) has incorporated the findings of neuroscience in the motivation research. His key constituent in the neurobiological explanation of motivation is "stimulus appraisal" which occurs along the five dimensions *novelty*, *pleasantness*, goal/need *significance*, *coping potential* and *self and social image* (Scherer 1984 in Schumann 2001:28). These dimensions become part of the learner's overall value system and are responsible for human action. The Self-Determination Theory by Deci & Ryan (1985) and Vallerand (1997) distinguishes between intrinsic (self-determined motivation) and extrinsic (motivation coming from external sources such as rewards or threats) motivation. Task Motivation tries to explain that learners show different degrees of interest and commitment towards different learning tasks. This task motivation has highly situation-specific motives. Concerning task motivation, learners show generalised motives, course-specific motives and task-specific motives. Task motivation is also "co-constructed by the participants" meaning that the motivation of a learner

decreases or increases depending on the attitude and motivation of a learning partner.

3.4 Learning styles

The field of learning styles is quite problematic when it comes to second language acquisition. There is no clear definition what a learning style is. Furthermore, different researchers have approached learning styles from different angles, resulting in overlapping definitions and different terminology. Generally speaking, a learning style is the way learners approach the task of learning. Learning styles are general approaches to learning. Cognitive style or learning style refers to the preferred style of a learner to process information or to approach a task. Kinsella (1995:171) defines learning style as “an individual’s natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills which persist regardless of teaching methods or content area”. The most extensively studied styles are field dependence (FD) and field independence (FI). According to Jonassen and Grabowski (1993:87), field dependence and field independence describe “the degree to which a learner’s perception or comprehension of information is affected by the surrounding perceptual or contextual field” and the extent to which, among others, the surrounding framework dominates the perception of items within it. Furthermore, it is affected by how a person perceives part of the field as a discrete form. A learner is field independent if he/she perceives analytically. Particular relevant items in a “field” are perceived as discrete from the surrounding field as a whole, rather than embedded in the field. A field dependent person perceives globally. His/her perception is dominated by the total field. The single parts cannot be easily distinguished (van Els et al. 1984:113).

There is a relationship between field independence and success in the acquisition of an L2. Furthermore, Chapelle (1995) describes FI/FD as the extent to which a learner relies on his or herself when completing a learning task. FI learners tend toward an autonomous, self-reliant model of processing whereas the FD learners are accustomed to counting on others for information and

approval. Categories of style are mostly presented as polarities on opposite ends of a continuum. Cognitive styles are consistent and stable. Once they are developed, they are maintained over time and across tasks. Along this continuum, each learner has sensory style dimensions (visual/auditory/hands-on) and social style dimension (extroverted/introverted). Furthermore, everyone has preferences along cognitive style dimensions, among which are concrete-sequential/abstract-intuitive, closure-oriented/open, detail-focused/holistic and analysing/synthesising (Oxford 2003:273). Learning styles are further divided into information-gathering cognitive styles (visual/haptic, visualiser/verbaliser, levelling/sharpening styles) and information-organising cognitive styles (serialist/holist styles and analystic/relational style).

Information-gathering cognitive styles	Visual/haptic style: Some learners process information visually and others tactilely. These styles have something to do with the development of a person. The older a person becomes, the more visual he/she becomes. Visualiser/verbaliser: These opposites refer to differences in learners who prefer to process information via graphics, diagrams or illustrations and others who process information in words through reading or listening. Levelling/sharpening: describes how people perceive and memorise images. Levellers tend to simplify stories and more frequently miss changes in sequentially presented information chunks. Sharpeners notice and recall small differences and thus are able to recall the original structure of a story. The older individuals become, the more they change from levelling to sharpening.

Information-organising cognitive styles	Serialist/holist: These opposites describe how individuals select and represent information. Holists opt for a thematic global approach to learning. They are able to concentrate on several aspects of the subject at the same time. Serialists concentrate on more details and work in a step-by-step way. Analytical/relational: Analytical means that learners can distinguish between the details of an object and the object as a whole. Individuals who use a relational style differentiate between categories of objects based on functional relationships.

Table 6: Learning styles

Reid (1995:xiii) lists hypotheses for learning styles in the ESL/EFL classroom. He is of the opinion that every person, student and teacher alike, has a learning style and learning strengths and weaknesses. Even though the learning styles are often described as opposites, they exist on wide continuums. All learning styles are value-neutral, that means that no style is better than others. Often students' strategies are linked to their learning styles but they must be encouraged to "stretch" their learning styles so that they will be more empowered in a variety of learning situations. Teachers should always allow their students to become aware of their learning strengths and weaknesses. Many studies have attempted to demonstrate a relationship between learning styles and proficiency or achievement. These studies have yielded mixed and very weak results concerning the relationship between learning styles and second language learning.

3.5 Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are part of the more general notion of communication strategy. Bialystok (1990:1) notes that, "The familiar ease and fluency with which

we sail from one idea to the next in our first language is constantly shattered by some gap in our knowledge of a second language." The gap can take many forms – a word, a structure, a phrase, a tense marker, and idiom. Our attempts to overcome these gaps have been called "communication strategies". Learning strategies are specific behaviours that learners use when learning a language and, with the help of these strategies, language learners can improve their learning. Strategies provide the tools for an active self-directed learning process which ultimately leads to the development of communicative competence, language proficiency and self-confidence.

Among researchers and practitioners there is no agreement as how to define learning strategies. Cohen (1998:4) defines language learning and language use strategies as, "those processes which are consciously selected by learners and which may result in action taken to enhance the learning or use of a second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language". Saville-Troike (2006:91) describes learning strategies as, "the behaviours and techniques [learners] adopt in their efforts to learn a second language". In literature, a distinction can be found between strategies, substrategies, techniques and tactics which all mean more or less the same. Cohen's (1998) solution to this would be to subsume all terms under "strategies" and to acknowledge that they range from broad categories to specific ones. Another distinction that can be found in literature is between production, communication and learning strategies.

A learning strategy is not something that people are necessarily endowed with. Learning strategies can be learnt and Rubin (1997 in Cohen1998:94) proposes that teachers provide the learners with certain activities in order to develop learning strategies. Teachers should direct the learners' attention to the need for strategies to accomplish given goals. Problems should be written down as they arise so that the learners are more mindful of areas in which more systematic strategising may be beneficial. It is helpful to use a checklist in order to view at a glance the possible range of strategies to choose from. Learners can then

compare the potential contribution of strategies on the list and learn to distinguish different strategies from each other. Learners should get to know alternate strategies for accomplishing the same task. Furthermore, they should become experienced in noting the strategies that they actually use, the contexts in which they are used, when they are used, how they are used, and how effectively they are used in those contexts.

Even though researchers agree that learning strategies are essential for the learning process there are still some problems in this field. These problems centre on the facts that there is no rigorous definition of learning strategies, that there is a problem of how to measure learning strategies and that there is no theory which explains how learning strategies contribute to the acquisition of an L2. What is clear is that learning strategies are influenced by the age, motivation and the learning style of the learner as well as by the experience with language and/or language learning. Ellis (2008:705) proposes that learning strategies are best defined in terms of a set of characteristics that are found in most definitions. Strategy use varies considerably as a result of both the kind of task the learner is engaged in and individual learner preferences. Strategies refer both to general approaches and specific actions or techniques used to learn an L2. But linguistic strategies can be performed in the L1 and the L2 and involve linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour. They are problem-orientated – the learner deploys a strategy to overcome some particular learning or communication problem. Learners are generally aware of the strategies they use and can identify what they consist of if they are asked to pay attention to what they are doing/thinking. Some strategies are behavioural while others are mental. Thus some strategies are directly observable while others are not. Strategies contribute indirectly to learning by providing learners with data about the L2 which they can then process. However, some strategies may also contribute directly. Weaver and Cohen (in Cohen 1998:66-67) propose that learners can improve their language learning skills when they self-diagnose their strengths and weaknesses in language learning, become more aware of what helps them to learn the language they are studying most efficiently, develop a broad range of problem-solving skills, experiment with

both familiar and unfamiliar learning strategies, make decisions about how to approach a language task, monitor and self-evaluate their performance and transfer successful strategies to new learning contexts.

Many researchers have attempted to classify language learner strategies. The classification systems of Oxford (1990) and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) are most commonly used. Oxford (1990) divides the strategies into direct (directly involve the target language and require mental processing of the language) and indirect ones (in close relation to the direct ones). These strategies are further subdivided into six groups: memory (creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing well and employing action), social (asking questions, cooperating with others and empathizing with others), affective (emotions, attitudes, motivations and values in the learning process), meta-cognitive (centering, arranging, planning and evaluating your learning), compensation (guessing intelligently and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing) and cognitive (e.g. practicing, receiving and sending messages, analysing and reasoning and creating structure for input and output).

In 1985 O'Malley et al.[3] conducted a study to identify second language learning strategies used by high school students. They followed the classification scheme of Brown and Palinesar (O'Malley 1990:118) who proposed meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies. Their meta-cognitive strategies are divided into self-monitoring, self-evaluation and planning. Planning is further subdivided into advance organisers, directed attention, functional planning, selective attention and self-management. Cognitive strategies comprise resourcing, repetition, grouping, deduction, imagery, auditory representation, keyword method, elaboration, transfer, inferencing, note taking, summarising, recombination and translation. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) added social mediation to the other strategies. This social component consists of question for clarification (additional

[3] O'Malley's colleagues in the study were Chamot a. U., Stewner-Manzanares G., Küppler L. and Russo R.

information, examples or verification from a teacher or peer) and cooperation (group work in order to e.g. solve a problem).

3.6 Personality

Saville-Troike (2006:89) characterises personality traits as endpoints on continua. Personality traits written in bold indicate positive correlation with success in learning a second language.

Anxious	-	**Self-confident**
Risk-avoiding	-	**Risk-taking**
Shy	-	**Adventuresome**
Introverted	-	Extroverted
Inner-directed	-	Other-directed
Reflective	-	Impulsive
Imaginative	-	Uninquisitive
Creative	-	Uncreative
Empathetic	-	Insensitive to others

Table 7 Personality traits according to Saville-Troike (2006:89)

Studies in this field do not show consistent results because personality traits are very difficult to define and to analyse. Let us take the example of “anxiety” which is defined by Spielberger (1983 in Horwitz 2001:113) as “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system”. It is not even possible to define clear relationships between the level of anxiety and successful language learning as many different types of anxiety have been identified. Additionally, levels of second language anxiety may also vary among different cultural groups.

According to Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:192) there are, however, two observations which can be made from the studies undertaken in the field. The

first is that for some personality traits the optimal setting for second language acquisition is a point medial between the two poles of the continuum. The second is that it is difficult to predict behaviour of a particular learner in a particular situation based on general trait measurements.

4 Second language acquisition

4.1 General overview

Long (1993) estimates that there are between 40 and 60 theories, hypotheses, models, metaphors, frameworks, perspectives, theoretical claims, theoretical models, theoretical frameworks and theoretical perspectives of SLA. They all differ in form, source and scope. Some of them are concerned with naturalistic SLA only, some with instructed SLA only, some with both. Some address children, some adults, some a specific cognitive capacity, some a specific psychological process, some a specific linguistic system and some a specific sub-system. Even though research in the field of second language acquisition has been attempting to develop a comprehensive theory of L2 learning, no such theory is in existence today. It is doubtful whether a comprehensive theory of second language acquisition that includes every aspect of the complex concept of learning another language will ever be developed. Theories should not be confused with models. A theory makes predictions and tries to explain the *why*. A model only describes processes of a phenomenon and tries to explain the *how*. In linguistics the two terms are often used interchangeably. Hypotheses and theories are also often used interchangeably. Whereas a theory unifies certain phenomena, a hypothesis does not. Hypotheses are generated from theory and can be tested by experimentation or observation.

There is no agreement among researchers what phenomena need to be explained in the field of SLA and what counts as an explanation. As stated above, according to Long there are between 40 and 60 theories of SLA. So there is not one theory of SLA that all researchers in the field agree upon. Most researchers examine one specific issue of SLA and thus there are numerous models, concepts, theories, hypotheses which all seek to explain SLA phenomena. Some researchers have set out to design a theory, which should describe all aspects involved in SLA, but nearly all of these theories are criticised by others and cannot keep their promise. Many views emerged around the

question what a theory of SLA is, whether these theories compete with each other and what a theory of SLA should explain. Block (1996:64) summarises these claims as follows: The existence of multiple theories in SLA research is problematic, and the field should be united around a single theory or a few theories. The alternative to such a concerted effort is a relativistic stance where "anything goes". There is not an ample body of "accepted findings" which a good theory of SLA will have to account for. The existence of "accepted findings" means that SLA researchers should get on with the task of putting the findings to the test, attempting to falsify them through replication studies. Second language learning can be viewed from a linguistic, a psychological or a social perspective. Each discipline has developed certain models, theories, concepts or hypotheses concerning how people learn a second language. Even though many older views are no longer valid in their entirety, every concept can contribute to the questions how, what and why a L2 is learnt.

Following the notion of "accepted findings" Long (1990:659.660) lists sample implications that SLA theories need to consider. According to Long's view, a theory of SLA must account for at least some of these major accepted findings but also needs to specify one or more mechanisms to explain interlanguage change. Among the implications are:

- universals in language and cognition
- environmental factors
- mechanisms driving development in learners of different starting ages or differential access to the same mechanisms
- not solely affective factors
- learning is conscious as well as unconscious, exposure to comprehensible and incomprehensible samples of language
- inadequateness of environmentalist theories of SLA
- incompleteness of a theory that assumes that change is a product of the steady accumulation of generalizations based upon the learner's perception of the frequencies of forms in the input.

From a historical point of view there have been three major approaches to language learning and teaching: the environmentalist, the innatist and the interactionist approach. The environmentalist approach was dominant until the end of the 1960s. It was rooted in the linguistic theory of structuralism and the psychological theory of behaviourism which was characterised by the two elements stimulus and response. These two theories influenced the teaching of languages. It was assumed that learning took place by imitating and practicing the same structures. Furthermore, teachers made it explicitly clear what should be taught and what the most difficult (surface) structures were. This environmental approach offered some explanations as to how people learn a language but it focused far too much on the input a learner received. Additionally, it was not possible to explain how learners acquire difficult grammatical structures.

The field of linguistics and psychology changed significantly in the 1960s. Language was now considered to consist of surface as well as deep level structures. What was more, the learners were now seen as active participants in the language learning process. The innatists, who believed that children possessed some kind of predisposed innate language learning device, focused on the output of the learner. From the 1970s on, researchers were interested in the functional analysis of language as well as the internal mental processes that were involved in language learning.

The interactionist ideas of language learning “emphasized the role of the linguistic environment in interaction with the child’s innate predisposition to language development” (Usó-Juan, Martínez-Flor 2006:10). This meant that learning was now seen as a dynamic, social and communicative act and teachers should focus on the cognitive capacity of the learners. As already mentioned, researchers do not agree on a single theory of second language acquisition. What also had to be made clear is the nature of the whole field. Researchers, for example, distinguish between acquisition and learning or

second and foreign language learning. So what is it that the field of language learning is dealing with?

When research in second language acquisition started to become an independent field of study, “language” was seen as “the formal knowledge of syntax, morphology and phonology” (Block 2003:59). In later years, and thanks to Chomsky’s work, there was a shift to more syntax and morphology. A more recent view is that language should not be seen in linguistic terms but as a means for communicative competence. Gregg (in Ritchie and Bhatia 1996:74) states that language covers “a multitude of different phenomena” and in the course of this paper many of these phenomena will be touched upon on the (rather bumpy) road to a theory of second language acquisition.

Some researchers make a distinction between acquisition and learning. The term “acquisition” is used for a process where a person picks up a second language in an informal context. Learning then means consciously studying a second language in a classroom environment. Apart from presenting theories that explicitly make this distinction, I will not do so throughout this work but will use the terms interchangeably. The distinction between naturalistic and instructed second language acquisition refers to the setting in which second language learning takes place. Naturalistic learning means that people pick up a second language on the street by communicating with the native speakers of this language. Instructed second language acquisition is carried out by means of teachers, textbooks or classroom instruction.

Sometimes a distinction is made between second and foreign language learning (which I will not make in this thesis). People learn a second language after they have learnt their L1. The term can also refer to a third or fourth language that is learnt. Second language learning means to learn a language in the country in which this target language is spoken. This can but does not need to take place in a classroom setting. A second language (L2) is often defined as “any language other than the first language” (Ellis 1994). It is distinct from a first language and a foreign language. It is an official or societally dominant language needed for

education, employment and other basic purposes (Saville-Troike:2006). Smith (1994) defines second language as any language other than the first language learnt by a given learner or group of learners a) irrespective of the type of learning environment and b) irrespective of the number of other non-native languages possessed by the learner. Many researchers use the term “target language” (TL). Foreign language learning on the other hand refers to learning an L2 in the environment of one’s own native language. In most cases this is done in classroom settings.

4.2 Second language acquisition theories - The early years

4.2.1 Description and stages of learner language

Early research in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) and language learning in general was heavily influenced by the linguistic and psychological paradigm of Behaviourism. The main notions thereby were “habits“ and “errors“. Central to this theory were the questions how habits were established and which stimuli produced which responses from learners. Learning can only occur through a combination of stimuli and responses, which are observable. The learning of a habit can thus only occur through imitation and reinforcement. According to Behaviourists, this was just an act of mimicking and analogising based on the concept of habits. Speech was just the reaction to a certain stimulus. In the 1960s the development of a new concept of first language acquisition by Chomsky, also changed the discipline of SLA. In his review of B.F. Skinner’s Verbal Behaviour (1959) Chomsky questioned the Behaviourist accounts of language learning. Behaviour that was observed in animals cannot directly be transferred to human language behaviour. He introduces the notion that every human being has an internal grammar. Only in this way is it possible to explain that children produce sentences that they have never heard before. Cook (1993) calls this innovation the “independent grammars assumption”. Chomsky continues by stating that humans must also be endowed with a “hypothesis-formulating” ability. The fact that children acquire grammars of great complexity within a limited timeframe is evidence for this hypothesis-formulating ability.

Chomsky (1959) states that all humans must have a built-in structure of an information-processing system which he later called Language Acquisition Device (LAD). For the first time in the short history of SLA research, the mind became more important than the environment.

When researchers realised that it does not suffice to explain second language acquisition by comparing the L1 and the L2, SLA research became a discipline in its own right. Lado's successful research in the field of Contrastive Analysis subsequently lead to the notion of interlanguage (IL). It was evident that learners at a certain point in time neither use the L1 nor the L2 but a third language. Selinker (1972) called this third language "interlanguage". Other researchers have used similar terms for the same notion. Nemser (1971) called it "approximative systems" and Corder (1971) referred to "idiosyncratic dialects" and "transitional competence". Nemser (1971:1-2) identified three language systems that occur in a contact situation: (1) The target language is that in which communication is being attempted; in the case of a learner it is the language he is learning, when he uses it; (2) The source language is that acting as a source of interference; it is normally the learner's native language and (3) An approximate system is the deviant linguistic system actually employed by the learner attempting to utilize the target language. Such approximative systems vary in character in accordance with proficiency level.

By interlanguage Selinker (1972:16) understood "the existence of a separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a target language norm". In other words, "interlanguage" describes what is also known as "learner language." According to Adjemian (1976) there is an unwritten assumption that interlanguages are natural languages. This assumption is at the heart of the interlanguage hypothesis. The uniqueness of interlanguages lies in their permeability, which means that they are incomplete linguistic systems constantly in a state of flux. The better the learners acquire the L2, the more they approximate the target language norms and during this learning system learners produce a lot of errors. Interlanguage

theory, according to Ellis (1982:207), means “that the learner constructs for himself a series of hypotheses about the grammar of the target language and consciously or unconsciously tests these out in formal or informal learning contexts”. Learners pass many stages as they gradually develop their language skills towards the target language. It is especially important for teachers to be aware of certain developmental stages as throughout these stages learners make a lot of errors. Only when teachers know about the systematicity of these errors they measure the progress of their learners. Brown (2000:227-229) divided the learner language development in terms of errors into four different stages. It is important to note, however, that these stages cannot describe a second language system in its entirety. Additionally, the stages do not follow one another. The learners may find themselves in different stages for different language aspects:

The stage of random errors: In this initial state the learners are only vaguely aware that there is some systematicity to the grammatical items they learn. It is a stage of inconsistencies, experimentation and wild guessing.

The emergent stage: The linguistic production of the learner starts to show some consistency. It is clear to the learner that there must be a certain language system and rules that govern it. These rules might not be correct in terms of target language standards but nevertheless form a certain framework for the learner. Central to this stage is “backsliding”. The learners seem to have internalised some rules or principles but nevertheless fall back on a previous stage. It is not possible for the learners to correct errors even if they are pointed out to them. A widely used strategy in this stage is avoidance.

The systematic stage: The learner language now shows more consistency. The rules learners apply are better formed and show a good approximation to the target language. This is the first stage in which the learners are able to correct their errors when they are pointed out to them.

The final stage: The final stage is characterised by stabilisation of the learner language system. The learners are able to communicate fluently, get their intended meaning across and make relatively few errors. In this stage the learners are able to self correct their errors.

4.2.1.1 Developmental patterns

Developmental patterns have been studied in natural speech and in unplanned language use. Before young children start to speak their mother tongue they go through a silent period. It takes quite a while before a child starts to speak. Similarly such a silent period has been observed in learners of a L2. However, probably because these learners have already acquired a language, this period is not obligatory and usually not as long. Researchers have found considerable differences between silent periods. Furthermore, it is not entirely clear which purpose a silent period serves for L2 learners. A second phenomenon is formulaic sequences. Many L2 learners use formulaic sequences when they talk. This means that they use prefabricated language chunks without analysing their constituents or even without fully understanding them. Formulaic speech is mostly used to facilitate communication but it is not clear to what extent it facilitates or hinders L2 acquisition. A third phenomenon of early language learning is the structural and semantic simplification of speech. Learners often only use one or two words to express whole sentences. They gradually add additional constituents to their “sentences” until they become grammatically correct.

In the 1970s Dulay and Burt were the first to carry out morpheme studies. They studied the order of acquisition of grammatical functions and found out that there might be a natural order in which children acquire specific morphemes and that the mother tongue of the learner does not influence the order of development. There have been many subsequent morpheme studies that all found out that the order of acquisition is quite similar for every learner irrespective of his/her age, language background and whether it is oral or written language. In more recent years, researchers have turned to analysing the acquisition of tense and aspect.

The European Science Foundation (Klein and Perdue) for example has examined how learners express temporality at different stages of their acquisition of an L2. Furthermore, there has been a growth of interest in the acquisition of L2 vocabulary and phonology. The study of L2 vocabulary, however, is quite difficult as there is no agreed terminal knowledge of a word. Thus it is hard to say whether a learner really "knows" a word.

Researchers also tried to find out whether the language acquisition device (which mentalists claim is responsible for child language acquisition) is also available to L2 learners. This became known as the L2 = L1 Hypothesis or "identity hypothesis". Especially in the early years of L1 and L2 acquisition, similarities between L1 and L2 learners, like a silent period, the use of formulas and structural and semantic simplification can be observed. There are, however, also differences. Adult learners for example do not necessarily pass through a silent period. Ellis (2008:106) states that "L2 learner language displays many of the features of L1 learner language plus some additional ones". Research evidence suggests that the hypothesis is partially supported, especially when it comes to syntactic structures. However, there are also significant differences. Yet even though there are great cognitive differences between adults and children, the similarities in their language development are striking.

4.2.1.2 Variability

Learner language is variable. Some of this variation can be attributed to the fact that learners progress in their learning and gradually use new forms. A second explanation for variability is social context. Learners use different speech in different social situations. SLA is faced with two problems when it comes to variability. The first problem centres on the question how, when language varies a lot, researches should collect variable data to study and analyse learner language. The second problem is of theoretical nature and poses the question how researchers should explain systematic and non-systematic variability when learner language sometimes proves to be systematic and sometimes not. Even though these two problems concern second language acquisition, they are also

important for second language teaching and teachers. It is essential for a teacher to realise why learners use certain forms (possibly erroneous) alongside each other and what this means in terms of language development. Learner output must account for vertical and horizontal variability.

William Labov's sociolinguistic work was very influential for the study of L2 variation. One of his most important research work centred on ways in which pronunciation varied according to the social class of the learner and the tasks learners had to perform. Labov (1970) lists five methodological axioms that explain how we should study language use. These axioms are central to understanding the nature of variability in language use.

1) Style Shifting: No single-style speakers can be observed. All speakers adapt their speech to the social context and the topic.
2) Attention: "Styles can be ranged along a single dimension, measured by the amount of attention paid to speech". The own speech of a speaker varies according to the situation.
3) The Vernacular: "The style in which the minimum attention is given to the monitoring of speech".
4) Formality: In systematic observation a speaker always uses speech that has some degree of formality and is different from the vernacular style.
5) Good data: The only way to obtain good data is through systematic observation like a tape-recorded interview.

Axiom four and five lead to the Observer's Paradox. Linguists want to find out how people talk when they are not observed but you can only carry out language research when you observe learners. The aim is to study the learner's vernacular style, which is the most systematic one. Labov suggests ways of overcoming this paradox. In order to be able to study the vernacular, the researcher must divert attention away from speech. This can be done by posing questions and involving the learner in topics that create strong emotions. Another solution is to study the learner in peer-group-speech instead of an individual interview.

Especially in initial stages of language learning, learner language is not systematic. Learners use two or more forms for uttering the same meaning. Researchers who want to detect free variation need to look at form-function relationships in order to find out which forms the learners use to express which meanings. Free variation largely contributes to instability in learner language as learners constantly strive to improve the efficiency of their language systems. It is highly inefficient to store two forms with the same meaning. For reasons of efficiency learners either integrate two forms with different meanings or eliminate new forms. According to Ellis (1985), central to SLA is the sorting out of form-function correlations.

For Tarone (1979) an interlanguage is a continuum of styles "which are defined by the degree of attention paid to speech" (1979:183). The most systematic second-language learner speech is produced when the learner is paying the least attention to speech. For Ellis (1985:94) "contextual variability serves as a mirror for viewing the course that subsequent development will take". Tarone (1983) applies Labov's Observer's Paradox to interlanguage. Especially Labov's (1969 in Tarone 1983:151) following three axioms are most relevant to interlanguage discussion: (1) There are no single-style speakers. Every speaker shifts linguistic and phonetic variables as the situation and topic change. (2) It is possible to range the styles of a speaker along a continuous dimension defined by the amount of attention paid to speech. (3) In the vernacular style, where the minimum amount of attention is given to speech, the most regular and systematic of phonological and grammatical patterns are evidenced. Other styles tend to show more variability.

Instead of "competence" Tarone uses "capability" and means "that which underlies, or guides, the regular language behaviour of the second-language learner". Capability thus underlies "all regular language behaviour" (1983:151). She states that the interlanguage capability of learners is heterogeneous and made up of a continuum of styles with the vernacular style at one end and the careful style at the other. In between are various styles or developmental stages.

Variability of learner language occurs within this particular language system that is internally consistent. According to her model, new forms enter interlanguage in two ways (Ellis 2008:411): directly into the learner's vernacular style, in which case they may subsequently "spread" to more formal styles over time or initially into the learner's most formal style, manifest only when the learner is paying close attention to speech production and subsequently by "spreading" into the less formal styles where they replace those forms that entered these styles earlier.

There is common agreement that learner language is variable but there is disagreement about the nature of this interlanguage. Some researchers (e.g. Tarone, Ellis) consider the learner's linguistic knowledge as variable whereas Gregg (1990 in Ellis 2008:415) sees it as homogeneous, consisting entirely of categorical rules. Variability thus is only a performance phenomenon. The concept of variability has led to new impetus for L2 research. However, it might be, as Cook (1993) puts it, "show more promise for the future than concrete results in the present".

4.2.1.3 Fossilisation

Ideally every second language learner should reach native-like competence. It is clear that this is a highly optimistic goal given the fact that, according to Selinker (1972), only 5 per cent of learners achieve native-like competence. Other researchers have suggested that this figure may only be 1 or 2 percent. This phenomenon was termed "fossilisation". Linguistic items, rules and subsystems will always be erroneous irrespective of the exposure to the target language. Especially under stress and when dealing with difficult matters, many linguistic problems, which were thought to have been mastered, reappear again.

Selinker and Lamendella (1978 in Ellis 2008:28) defined fossilisation as:

> *…a permanent cessation in learning before the learner has attained target language norms at all levels of linguistic structure and in all discourse domains in site of the learner's positive ability, opportunity, and motivation to learn and acculturate into target society."*

The term is a somewhat problematic construct. Learners vary considerably in the extent to which they fossilise. There is the possibility that learners reach native-like competence in some aspects of the L2 but not in others. So the question arises against which norms we use to test whether a learner has reached a certain standard. This is problematic insofar as every language system, including that of the native speaker, is permanently changing. Therefore it is not sensible to measure a learner's L2 competence against a changing system. A solution to this problem could be the introduction of the term "stabilisation" in contrast to "fossilisation". According to Ellis (2008:30), "stabilisation is easier to demonstrate empirically as it does not constitute a permanent condition…to demonstrate fossilisation it is necessary to provide evidence that the learner's L2 system is permanently stabilised". Selinker (1988:84) noted that, "no single ontological factor – neither feedback on communicative success, nor acculturation into the target society, nor maturational stage – in and of itself could possibly account for more than very limited aspects of fossilisation in attempted language learning". He also comes up with five (tentative) conclusions concerning fossilisation (1988:86):

- Internal factors constitute the domain of control over onset of fossilisation
- The interactive needs of particular learners constitute the most direct source of fossilisation and may be considered to provide the fundamental lower bound on fossilisation.
- Selected portions of the learner's utterances may be differentially reinforced via feedback.
- Interlanguage learning cannot be accounted for solely in terms of a need for particular sorts of feedback.
- Reinforcement may take place separately for communicative competence versus grammatical correctness.

Even though a consensus has not been reached on what fossilisation is and how we can describe it, it still is an important construct in second language acquisition.

4.2.2 Language transfer

A first language (L1) is the language that children acquire during early childhood. It is learnt as part of growing up among the child's home community. Roughly synonymous terms are native language, mother tongue and primary language. This description is somewhat problematic as it presupposes a monolinguistic language situation. In reality there are many countries where two or even three languages are learnt from birth. These situations are called "bilingual first language acquisition". The acquisition of the first language is, as Klein (1986:3) puts it, "primary" in at least two ways. It is primary in terms of sequence (it is the first language one learns) and in terms of importance. The acquisition of a first language is inextricably linked to the cognitive and social development of the child. The role of the first language changed over the course of SLA history. The first language has, however, always been considered as an influential factor of SLA. Researchers in the early days of second language acquisition research were mainly interested in how the learner's first language influences the acquisition of a second language. This mutual influence was called "language transfer". Odlin (1989:27) defines transfer as "the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired". He adds that no definition of transfer can be fully adequate without a fully adequate definition of language. A distinction is made between positive transfer (facilitation) and negative transfer (interference). Positive transfer results in something correct while negative transfer in something incorrect. Transfer occurs from the first to the second language and is negative when there is proactive inhibition. This results in learners' errors. In cases where first and second language habits are the same, positive transfer can be observed. Great differences between two languages mean more difficulty in learning and more errors. Similarities between two languages lead to easier learning.

Since the second half of the twentieth century, researchers have been studying and analysing children learning their mother tongue. Gradually research results

in child language led researchers to draw analogies between the acquisition of a first and a second language. As children learn their mother tongue without any formal instruction, we need to be cautious in making direct comparisons. Apart from that we also need to bear in mind that the mental capacities of adults learning a second language are totally different. However, through the study of first language learning we can gain understanding of principles of second language learning.

It is interesting to see that children all over the world acquire their mother tongue similarly. Of course they all start out with crying and gurgling sounds, but by the age of four children know the basic structures of their L1. The metalinguistic level (to treat language as an object) needs a longer development and begins around the time when children start to read. This is because for the first time children see the representation of a word by letters. The acquisition of the first language follows developmental sequences that are determined by the cognitive development of the children. Gass and Selinker (2008:37-38) list certain conclusions that we can draw about children learning their first language and which are also applicable in a second language context: Children go through the same developmental stages, although not necessarily at the same rate. They create systematicity in their language and develop rules to govern their language knowledge and language use. The rules that are developed do not necessarily correspond to the rules of the adult language. There is over-generalisation of grammatical morphemes and processing constraints that govern acquisition and use and correction does not always work. Language acquisition is not determined by intelligence.

How do children, despite the complexity of the language system, reach a final state of L1 development? This question is known as the “logical problem of language learning”. Most researchers assume that children reach this final state because they possess an innate language learning device. Noam Chomsky’s language acquisition theory – Universal Grammar – centres on this innate language acquisition device.

4.2.3 Contrastive Analysis

For Behaviourists, errors were considered the result of “non-learning” rather than “wrong learning”. Therefore, researchers tried to find a way to predict errors in order to improve second language learning. The means for predicting these errors was Contrastive Analysis. It has its roots in Fries’s concern for effective teaching resources by comparing a learner’s native language to the language to be learnt:

> *The most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learnt, carefully compared with parallel description of the native language of the learner.*
>
> (Fries 1945 in Selinker 1992:6)

For Fries it was important to build up “a set of habits for the oral production of a language and for the receptive understanding of the language when it is spoken.” This could be achieved through effective teaching materials and the learning of “automatic habits” and “unconscious habits”. Lado (1967) developed Fries’s work further and presented the contrastive analysis (CA) approach. He compared the learner’s native language to the second language with the aim of predicting learner errors. Like Fries he was interested in the development of teaching resources. The only feasible way for him to write a textbook was to analyse the differences and similarities of the native language of the learner and the language to be learnt. Contrastive Analysis was done in several steps:

- Description of the two languages which should be compared
- Selection of language areas which were thought to be problematic for the learner
- Comparison of the identified areas
- Predictions of possible learner errors

Lado’s work provides the basis for much research in the field of SLA and interlanguage. Like many other concepts or hypotheses, Lado’s was questioned in the course of history. Most problematic was Lado’s assumption that with CA

teachers can diagnose learner's language problems accurately. According to Selinker (1992:21) there are three theoretical claims that result from Lado's work: (1) The second language learner expects to find some equivalent in the TL which he can compare to his NL. (2) Learning has to be involved when the learner wants to get closer to the TL. (3) Problems arise for the learner when TL and NL patterns are different.

According to Wardhaugh (1970:123) the CA exists in a strong and a weak version. Both versions are based on the assumption that in learning a second language there is always interference from the L1. The predictive or strong version is an a priori CA, whereas the explanatory or weak version is an a posteriori CA (Schachter 1974:205). The strong form claims that it is possible to predict all L2 errors by identifying the differences between the L1 and the L2. This is problematic insofar as that it is not possible to predict difficulties that are only based on CA. The weak form only claims to diagnose and identify errors in L2 speech. Therefore it should work closely together with Error Analysis (EA). This weak version of the Contrastive Analysis is nowadays known as "cross-linguistic influence" (CLI). This means that prior language knowledge plays an important role in second language learning. Today the emphasis is on "influence" rather than on prediction of learner difficulty.

As the Contrastive Analysis only constituted a hypothesis it should have been tested more thoroughly. There has been quite some criticism which Ellis (1985:27) sums up as three types:

1. Can Contrastive Analysis really predict errors?

Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974 in Ellis 1985:28) were among the first to examine learner errors empirically. In their studies they found four types of errors:

- Interference-like errors (structures that are similar to the native language but not to the first language)
- First language developmental errors (errors that do not reflect native language structure but are found in first language acquisition data)

- Ambiguous errors (errors that are neither interference-like nor developmental)
- Unique errors (errors that do not reflect first language structure and are not found in first language acquisition data)

Dulay and Burt calculated the errors of Spanish-speaking children learning English. They found out that only 3 per cent of the errors could be attributed to interference. The vast majority (85 per cent) were developmental errors and 12 per cent were unique errors. From this study they concluded that interference does not play a major part in second language learning. L2 learning should rather be seen as an independent challenge quite similar to that of learning an L1. Phonology is the only field in which interference could be a major factor. Other studies, however, come to different results than Dulay and Burt but nevertheless it is evident that interference is not the only cause for errors. So the main criticism of Contrastive Analysis was the fact that habit-formation together with the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis could not explain second language acquisition sufficiently.

2. Can languages be compared by means of Contrastive Analysis?

Chomsky attacked the psychological side of language learning theories. He argued that habit-formation studied on animals could not be transferred to language learning and thus he questioned interference as the central element of language learning. Other criticism centred on the fact that learning difficulty does not arise as a direct consequence of linguistic differences between two languages. It was shown that there was no direct relation between difficulty and error, which meant a strong attack on the central claim of the Contrastive Analysis.

3. Can Contrastive Analysis offer anything relevant to language teaching?

The main criticism in this respect is caused by the different view of errors in language teaching. Errors were formally seen as something that should be avoided whereas today they are seen as a kind of hypothesis testing and are

therefore nothing negative. In the 1970s, the claims made by Lado and Fries that contrastive analysis could predict the relationship between first and second language acquisition were seriously challenged. Selinker (1992) for example asks why the "notion of CA as predictor or errors" became such a strong claim in Lado's work and in the work of researchers of his time. When CA could not predict all errors of second language learners, many researchers abandoned Lado's hypotheses entirely. Furthermore, Contrastive Analysis did not turn out to be a suitable tool for predicting all learners' errors. Sometimes errors were predicted that did not occur and learners also made errors which could not be predicted by CA. Thus, the influence of the L1 was questioned and the Contrastive Analysis as a research tool became less and less popular. In Brown's (2000:213) concluding remarks on Contrastive Analysis, he states that "indeed, the strong form of the CAH was too strong, but the weak form was also perhaps too weak. Cross linguistic influence research offers a cautious middle ground". Over the years it became clear that the L1 has a role to play in the acquisition of a second language and gradually the Contrastive Analysis was modified to include factors like:

Avoidance: When learners are at the beginning of learning a second language they are especially faced with the problem that they want to express something but simply lack the linguistic means to do so. Researchers observed that students who are not confident with a certain language structure do not use it in the first place and thus avoid certain difficulties. Even though learners "knew" a certain structure at least from a comprehensible perspective, they chose not to use it and their choice was based on their respective native languages. Gass/Schachter (2008:139) conclude that "although L1-L2 similarity and inherent complexity have a role, the only factor that consistently predicts avoidance is the L1-L2 difference variable".

Degree of similarity: A central statement of the transfer theory that has its roots in the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis is "the greater the difference between two languages the greater the difficulty for the learners and the more errors occur".

Studies (e.g. by Lee 1968), however, showed that this is not always the case. Quite on the contrary - there is more interference when there is great similarity between languages or language structures. Even though it is undisputed that interference occurs, it is not clear in which contexts. Ellis (1985:35) sees the task of SLA to "specify precisely what the crucial similarity measures consist of in order to predict, or explain with greater accuracy, when interference takes place."

The multi-factor nature of learner error: Originally, in the early SLA research, errors were exclusively attributed to one factor. They were either the result of interference or of e.g. developmental processing. Later research (e.g. by Hatch 1983) indicates that language errors always have multiple factors. According to Ellis (1985:36) it is likely that three sets of factors (universal factors, specific factors about the learner's L1 and specific factors about the L2) are involved in SLA. In a multi-factor SLA approach the relationships between these three factors need to be identified.

A reinterpretation of interference as intercessions: As noted above, the Contrastive Analysis fell into disfavour because it could not predict most of the errors language learners make. There was a shift away from the behaviourist view of language as habit-formation towards a mentalist view in which the learner was actively contributing to the learning process. Whenever the learner is actively engaged in the learning process, he/she needs to use strategies to sort the L2 data and to use this data. These strategies are not compatible with Behavioural thinking that one can only examine the observable. Corder (1978) and Krashen (1981) (both in Ellis 1985:37) both proposed a solution to the problem. Instead of interference, Corder introduces the concept of intercession which he considers a strategy of communication. Krashen suggests that the L1 can serve as a pool of knowledge when the knowledge of the L2 is not sufficient for communication. For Corder and Krashen, the L1 serves as a resource for ad hoc translation to overcome communication limitations.

Contrastive Pragmatics: Contrastive pragmatics states that it is not enough to only compare pure linguistic parameters in the framework of a Contrastive

Analysis. Equally important is the comparison between pragmatic realisations of two languages. But, as Ellis (1985:38) points out, “Contrastive Pragmatics is not just about comparing the communicative functions of different languages. It is also about comparing how different languages express the same communicative function”. Later on the Markedness Differential Hypothesis reformulated the Contrastive Analysis. The terms “less marked” and “unmarked” are used to describe linguistic features that are natural in human language. However, there is no clear definition of markedness, which leads researchers to different conclusions about the effect on second language acquisition.

In contrast to the Contrastive Analysis the notion of “markedness“ states that the transferability of different linguistic features is dependent on their degree of markedness. Marked language items are more difficult to learn than unmarked or basic ones. This fuzzy concept often makes it difficult to determine which language features are marked and which are not. Eckmann (1977) proposed a Markedness Differential Hypothesis, which should predict the relative degrees of difficulty based on principles of universal grammar. Celce-Murcia and Hawkins (1985 in Brown 2000:214) give a summary of markedness theory:

> *It distinguishes member of a pair of related forms or structures by assuming that the marked member of a pair contains at least one more feature than the unmarked one. In addition, the unmarked (or neutral) member of the pair is the one with a wider range of distribution than the marked one. For example, in the case of the English indefinite articles (a and an), “an” is the more complex or marked form (it has an additional sound) and ”a” is the unmarked form with the wider distribution.*

Eckmann (1977:321) makes three predictions how markedness affects language transfer in his Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH):

1) Those areas of the TL which differ from the native language and are more marked than the native language will be difficult.
2) The relative degree of difficulty of the areas of the TL which are more marked than the native language will correspond to the relative degree of markedness.

3) Those areas of the TL which are different from the NL but are not more marked than the NL will not be difficult.

The role of the L1 is much more positive within the framework of the Markedness Differential Hypothesis than researchers in the tradition of the Contrastive Analysis assumed. It is not so much the differences but the similarities between an L1 and an L2 which cause problems for language learners.

4.2.4 From Contrastive Analysis towards Error Analysis

Corder, Nemser and Selinker dealt with Error Analysis and interlanguage at about the same time. Smith (1994:30) found that their three proposals had essential features in common: the existence of a complex, creative learning device, internal coherence in the learner's language system, the independent character of the learner's system and the anti-behaviourist character.

Whereas Contrastive Analysis had been concerned with the comparison between a L1 and a L2, Error Analysis (EA) was the first approach to the study of SLA which put emphasis on the learner and his creative ability to deal with a new language. Corder's article "The significance of learner's errors", published in 1967, became very influential because he analysed errors of second language learners in a totally new light. Until then, a behaviouristic view of second language acquisition prevailed and errors were always seen in relation to the mother tongue. In Corder's view, what had been overlooked thereby were the errors that could not be explained by L1 interference. According to Corder (1981) errors were not treated correctly in second language teaching. The teachers' and the researchers' views as well as their motivation concerning understanding learners' errors were quite different. Teachers knew from their experience where the learners' problems lie and they were more concerned with how to deal with these difficulties. Researchers were much more interested in indentifying language problems.

In terms of methodology there were two views on learners' errors: (1) Errors are only a result of our poor teaching methods. If the teaching methods were better,

errors would not occur in the first place. (2) Nobody is perfect hence errors occur no matter how hard we try. We should, rather, find a way of dealing with errors after they have occurred. Corder was of the belief that in his times of new hypotheses about first and second language learning, Error Analysis was of great importance. The hypotheses were that: a child is born with an innate disposition to acquire language, a child must be exposed to language in order to acquire it and a child is able to create his/her own grammar. Corder proposed that the learning of a first and a second language is fundamentally the same, but whether the sequence of learning is the same has to be seen. In errors he sees the evidence of the system of a built-in syllabus. He calls the distinction between systematic (errors of competence) and non-systematic errors (errors of performance) the transitional competence of the learner. As a consequence it is useful to refer to errors of performance as *mistakes* and to systematic errors as *errors*. Errors show which language system a learner is using at a particular time. The significance of errors is threefold:

1) to the teacher – how is the progress of the learner and what remains to be learnt
2) to the researcher – which strategies or procedures do learners apply when learning a second language
3) to the learner – only through errors can a language be learnt and the hypothesis of the own language system be tested

Corder (1981) states that only when we know more about the built-in syllabus of the learner are we able to adapt ourselves to the needs of the learner. We might no longer take our preconceptions of how and what has to be learnt for granted. Error Analysis always means an investigation of “the language of second language learners” and is a synonym for learner’s language. Corder calls this language “idiosyncratic dialect” or “transitional dialect” because it has a grammar, because the mother tongue and the learner language share some rules of grammar and because it is “the shared behaviour of a social group”.

Like any other field of research, Error Analysis has been criticised. Saville-Troike (2006:40) for example, sees three shortcomings of EA. There is ambiguity in classification because it is extremely difficult if not impossible to find a classification system for all learner errors. Furthermore, we lack positive data. Errors are not the only factors that can provide information about what a learner has already learnt. The third shortcoming is the potential for avoidance. Learners often do not use difficult structures so potential errors are avoided. Even though they acknowledge that EA is part of most language teaching classes, Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) provide an overview of the potential weaknesses of EA:

The analysis of errors in isolation: EA means extracting errors from a corpus. Researchers are then so occupied with organising the errors that they exclude the corpus. To deal only with the errors and exclude the non-errors is one of the greatest weaknesses of EA.

The proper classification of identified errors: Errors are described in relation to the target language system. During the critical stage of an EA project, wrong decisions are made as researchers pose the question: “What structure is this an error in?” The answers to this question are often unreliable.

Statements of error frequency: Studies that give absolute frequency or point out that certain systematic errors are more frequent than others are not very useful. It would be more sophisticated to put the emphasis on relative rather than on absolute frequency of errors and thus be more informative for pedagogical and developmental reasons.

The identification of points of difficulty in the target language: EA cannot predict where learners avoid certain language structures which would be potentially erroneous. No analysis of errors can identify areas of difficulty which are not used by learners.

The ascription of causes to systematic errors: We must be very cautious when we claim to have identified the cause of an error type. It is not always clear whether errors have interlingual/developmental or interlingual/intralingual causes.

The biased nature of sampling procedures: EA data is not always as objective or statistically random as it should be. Reasons are that researchers are limited when it comes to background languages, subjects and data samples.

Saville-Troike (2006:37-38) found four developments which caused a replacement of Contrastive Analysis by Error Analysis in the field of second language acquisition:

- Predictions made by CA about learner errors did not always come true. Furthermore many errors were not due to a transfer from L1 to L2.
- With the change in linguistic theory there was a shift from surface-level forms to underlying rules of a language.
- Behaviourist assumptions of language learning were seriously questioned. The innate capacity of the learner became much more important than external factors.
- Pedagogy was no longer the driving force of the study of SLA. Learning processes were studied independently of their use in language teaching.

4.2.5 Creative Construction

Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis had a focus on the L1 as interference on L2, but not so much on the part the learner plays in acquiring a second language. Over the years, researchers became more and more interested in the question whether there was a natural order in the grammatical development of learners of a second language. Research in SLA was based on Robert Brown's study of the acquisition of English as a first language (1975). He did a longitudinal study with three children – Adam, Eve and Sarah – in which he collected data over a four-year period. He found that the three children learnt fourteen grammatical morphemes in more or less the same order. He also found that certain learning behaviours are the same no matter what mother tongue they had or what second language they were learning. So it was assumed that learning must be a combination of innate mental structures and the environment and not just repetition or interferences of the L1. This view became known as "creative construction" and was further developed by Dulay and Burt. They (1982)

designed a working model for Creative Construction in L2 Acquisition, which consists of several elements. The language environment, the personality, the age and the first language of the learner are of crucial importance in the second language learning process. When talking about first language, transfer from the first to the second language is meant. Dulay and Burt (1975:27) noted that transfer of syntactic patterns of the L1 rarely occurs but transfer in the form of learning process indeed occurs in L2 acquisition. However, external factors cannot be directly observed or examined. At the heart of their model are internal factors namely the filter, the organiser and the monitor. The filter has to do with affective factors that determine how effectively learners acquire a second language (motives, needs, attitudes, emotions). It is the first obstacle in the learning process and screens the input. The filter has a close relation to the motivation of the learner. The organiser is a subconscious internal processing system which organises and controls the new language system. The monitor is responsible for conscious linguistic processing and is also part of the learner's internal system. As it is a conscious mechanism it is according to Dulay and Burt (1982:59) dependent on: the learner's age, the amount of formal instruction the learner has experienced, the nature and focus required by the verbal task being performed and the individual personality of the learner. Both the organiser and monitor mechanisms are responsible for the acquisition of linguistic knowledge. Whereas the organiser is only a device for language acquisition, the monitor may serve as a mechanism for conscious learning in other areas.

Dulay and Burt applied Brown's studies of child L1 developmental sequences to the acquisition of L2. In their morpheme studies they found that the acquisition sequences of children in different host country environments and with different language backgrounds were very similar. Many more morpheme studies were undertaken and they all had similar results which Smith (1994:50-51) sums up as follows:

- Second language acquisition is driven by essentially the same set of processes that are active in first language acquisition

- L2 structures are developed in a particular “pre-programmed” sequence irrespective of the L1 background of the learner
- There may be a mini-sequence of intermediate forms leading up to the particular target
- Language acquisition is not directly amenable to deliberate control by either learner or teacher
- Language input must be comprehensible to the learner and must contain samples of the next construction on the list in the developmental sequence

4.3 Cognitive models and theories of Second Language Acquisition

The cognitive models and theories of second language acquisition have their roots in cognitive psychology. They look at the roles that cognitive processes play in the acquisition of an L2. Originally there was a distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge of language and between declarative and procedural knowledge and most of them have only concentrated on certain aspects of the acquisition process. According to Ellis (2008:455), a complete cognitive theory of L2 acquisition would need to account for: how learners extract information about the L2 from the input, how they “operate” on this information internally in order to construct an interlanguage, the role played by explicit knowledge of the L2 in the development of implicit (procedural) knowledge, the role played by learner output and the role played by the learner’s L1.

Cognitive learning models are based on the assumption that in learning, different processes work together. More recent models (called information processing or computational models) assume an internal computation of data between input and output. Within the cognitive framework learning a language is seen as the same process as learning any other skill. Krashen was the first to put forward a theory of second language acquisition within the framework of cognitive learning. He presented a general theory of second language acquisition that attempted to answer the questions:

- What constitutes knowledge of language?
- How is knowledge of language acquired?
- How is knowledge of language put to use?

Until Krashen's Monitor Model for second language acquisition, researchers only established hypotheses and concepts. Krashen introduced a comprehensive model of second language learning which consists of five hypotheses. Central to his model is implicit and explicit knowledge in form of the acquisition and learning distinction.

The acquisition-learning distinction

According to Krashen (1987), this is probably the "most fundamental of all the hypotheses". As the name already states, this hypothesis distinguishes between language acquisition and language learning for adults. Acquisition is a subconscious process and is identical to the way children acquire a first language. But not only the process itself, also the acquired competence is subconscious. While communicating people do not think about rules of a language they rather have, as Krashen puts it, a "feel for correctness". Language learning by contrast is a conscious process. Whereas language acquisition means "picking up" a language, language learning means "knowing about" a language specifically knowing the grammatical rules underlying a language and also being able to talk about these rules. This hypothesis arrives at the conclusion that not only children but also adults have access to a natural "language acquisition device".

The Natural Order Hypothesis

Krashen bases this hypothesis on language acquisition research, which found that grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable order. Prominent studies in this field are those of Brown and Dulay and Burt. Even though the order of acquisition of a second language is not identical to that of a first language, many similarities can be observed.

The Monitor Hypothesis

The Monitor Hypothesis tries to explain how the separate processes of acquisition and learning are used. Acquisition is the part of our speech that is responsible for fluency whereas learning serves as a monitor. This corrects our spoken or written utterances. According to Krashen (1987), this hypothesis implies that “formal rules or conscious learning plays a limited role in second language performance.” He states three conditions for use of the Monitor (1987:16):

Time: In order to think about and use conscious rules effectively, a second language performer needs to have sufficient time. For most people, normal conversation does not allow enough time to think about and use rules. The over-use of rules in conversation can lead to trouble.

Focus on form: To use the Monitor effectively, time is not enough. The performer must also be focussed on form. Even when we have time, we may be so involved in *what* we are saying that we do not attend to *how* we are saying it.

Know the rule: Linguistics has taught us that the structure of language is extremely complex. We can be sure that our students are exposed only to a small part of the total grammar of the language, and we know that even the best students do not learn every rule they are exposed to.

Krashen (1987:19-29) explained individual differences in second language performance on individual differences in the use of the Monitor. He suggests that there are three types of Monitor users:

- *Monitor over-users*: These are people who attempt to Monitor all the time, performers who are constantly checking their output with their conscious knowledge of the second language. As a result, such performers may speak hesitantly, often self-correct in the middle of utterances, and are so concerned with correctness that they cannot speak with any real fluency…
- *Monitor under-users*: These are performers who have not learnt, or if they have learnt, prefer not to use their conscious knowledge, even when conditions allow it. Under-users are typically uninfluenced by error

correction, can self-correct only by using a “feel” for correctness (e.g. “it sounds right”), and rely completely on the acquired system…

- *The optimal Monitor user*: Our pedagogical goal is to produce optimal users, performers who use the Monitor when it is appropriate and when it does not interfere with communication. Many optimal users will not use grammar in ordinary conversation, where it might interfere…In writing, and in planned speech, however, when there is time, optimal users will typically make whatever corrections they can to raise the accuracy of their output…

The Affective-Filter Hypothesis

The Affective Filter attempts to explain the role affective factors play in the second language acquisition process.

Affective variables in second language acquisition can be summarised in three categories:

1) Motivation: The higher the motivation the better the results in second language acquisition.
2) Self-confidence: Students with high self-confidence usually show better results than those with low self-confidence
3) Anxiety: A low anxiety level is helpful in acquiring a second language

The Input Hypothesis

Krashen (1985) states that, “humans acquire language in only one way – by understanding messages, or by receiving comprehensible input”. Speaking is a result of acquisition and not its cause and if the input is understood, the grammar is provided automatically. For Krashen input is “the essential environmental ingredient”. This hypothesis is the central element of Krashen’s theory of second language learning. It tries to answer the question: “How do we acquire language?” (1987:20). Krashen introduces his famous i + 1 rule which states that in order to acquire a second language one must move from state *i* to stage *i + 1*. This means that an acquirer must understand the meaning and not the form of a

message. Krashen is so occupied with the properties of the input that he does not explain the actual process of acquisition. Also he does not even set out to explain how the comprehensible input is processed in the mind. For him, the language environment is more important than the acquisition of a second language. The syntax of a language is not treated as an overall comprehensive system but as list of items. Therefore Krashen seldom covers phonology or vocabulary but works in the tradition of phrase structure analysis and grammatical morpheme studies. Even though the theory was attacked by Gregg (1984:94) with the remark that, “we have seen that each of Krashen’s five hypotheses is marked by serious flaws: undefined or ill-defined terms, unmotivated constructs, lack of empirical content and thus of falsifiability, lack of explanatory power,” it is still a valid attempt to include various factors relevant to second language acquisition into a single theory.

Bialystok developed a model of second language acquisition which she revised over the years but in her original attempt (1978) the central features were the distinction between implicit and explicit knowledge and two types of output. For her, explicit linguistic knowledge “contains all the conscious facts the learner has about the language”. These are for example: grammar rules, vocabulary and pronunciation rules. This explicit linguistic knowledge has three functions: it stores information, is a “buffer for new information about the language” and makes implicit language knowledge conscious. Implicit language knowledge is a working system which comprises information about the L2 used in spontaneous speech. The greater the implicit knowledge, the better the fluency of the speaker. If a speaker has extensive explicit knowledge it means that he/she knows formal aspects of the L2 but does not necessarily speak the language fluently. Bialystok (1978) also distinguishes two types of output: Type I and Type II. Type I output is spontaneous whereas Type II is “deliberate and occurs after a delay”. In her revised version of her model, Bialystok was concerned with the relationship “between different types of knowledge and different types of language use” (Ellis 2008:422).

Another model is the Multidimensional one, which is based on research carried out within the ZISA project (Zweisprachenerwerb Italienischer und Spanischer Arbeiter) in the late 1970s by Meisel, Clahsen and Pienemann. The model takes into account the developmental sequence of certain language aspects as well as the variational sequence. Originally, the ZISA project did research into the field of L2 learning of German word order. What makes the Multidimensional Model valuable for SLA research is the fact that it attempts to explain developmental patterns. The Multidimensional Model is quite similar to the Input Hypothesis but it is more comprehensive. Ellis (1994:382-383) makes five claims about the model:

1) Learners manifest developmental sequences in the acquisition of a number of grammatical structures, such as word order and some grammatical morphemes.
2) Learners also display individual variation, both with regard to the extent to which they apply developmental rules and to the extent to which they acquire and use grammatical structures that are not developmentally constrained.
3) Developmental sequences reflect the systematic way in which learners overcome processing constraints. These constraints are of a general cognitive nature and govern production.
4) Individual learner variation reflects the overall orientation to the learning task, which in turn is the product of socio-psychological factors.
5) Formal instruction directed at developmental features will only be successful if learners have mastered the prerequisite processing operations associated with the previous stage of acquisition. However, formal instruction directed at grammatical features subject to individual variation faces no such constraints.

4.4 Sociocultural Theory and SLA

So far the theories and hypotheses presented have focused on linguistic and psycholinguistic aspects of language learning. Sociocultural theory is more

concerned with the use of language and has different views about the conceptualisation of L2 knowledge as well as the way L2 knowledge is developed. The theory is based on work of the Russian psychologist L.S. Vygotsky. Second language acquisition is seen as embedded in a contextual situation and focuses on situated language in relation to internal processes. It does not, as the title might suggest, try to explain how learners acquire the culture of the L2. Semantic aspects of language are more important than formal properties. Sociocultural theory features some key constructs which are different from more traditional approaches of SLA. These are: mediation, regulation, internalisation and the Zone of Proximal Development.

Mediation

Mediation is the most important construct in sociocultural theory. Learning is not a process that takes place only in the learner's brain. Learners rather use tools and activities with which they change the world around them. Furthermore, we use symbolic tools/artefacts (numbers, arithmetic systems, music, art, language) and signs when we interact with others. Gass/Selinker (2008:283) state that human activity (including cognitive activity) is mediated by what is known as symbolic artefacts (higher-level cultural tools such as language and literacy) and by material artefacts. These artefacts mediate the relationship between humans and the social and material world around us. They are passed on from generation to generation and are thus modified and adapted to the current situation. Languages, for example, undergo continuous change in order to serve their "communicative and psychological needs" (Lantolf 2000:2).

Regulation

Regulation is a form of mediation and centres around the notion that we learn to regulate our activities. The goal thereby is to reach self-regulation. There are three stages on our way to self-regulation: object regulation (the use of objects as a way of thinking), other-regulation (learning is regulated by others) and self-regulation (we do not need external support for our activities).

Internalisation

According to Gass and Selinker (2008:284), internalisation “is the process that allows us to move the relationship between an individual and his/her environment to later performance.” One important example of internalisation is imitation. Through imitation learners reach self-regulation. Internalisation can be observed in children or pupils when they imitate or practice what they have heard before. They use private speech in order to regulate complex tasks.

Zone of Proximal Development

Lantolf (2000:17) states that the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is “a metaphor for observing and understanding how meditational means are appropriate and internalized”. Vygotsky’s definition states that the ZPD is the difference between what a person can achieve when acting alone and what the same person can accomplish when acting with support from someone else and/or cultural artefacts. Learning is the result of interpersonal activity which is the basis for individual functioning. In summing up the concept, human cognition, according to Gass and Selinker (2000:285), “results from the full context in which experiences take place. Thus, the experiences we have, and the interactions we engage in, are crucial in the development of cognition. Language is a tool (a symbolic artefact) that mediates between individuals and their environment”.

After Vygotsky’s death, several Russian researchers developed his work further. The result became known as “Activity theory”. Central to this theory is the understanding that certain motives determine how people respond to a specific task. Different people with different motives thus respond differently to the same task. These motives are either biologically or socially constructed. The motives all stem from a particular “activity system” which is influenced by many other activity systems. The activity itself is at the centre of analysis. Lantolf and Appel (1994:17) find, “it is difficult to conceive of any form of human activity, practical or symbolic, as free of sociocultural influence”. So the fundamental question underlying the Activity Theory asks, “What is the individual or group doing in a particular setting?” The answer lies in the three components of the theory –

activity, action and operation. According to Block (2003:101), activity "refers to the general motive or driving force behind actions of any kind". It is closely related to the concept of motive. Action defines the goal of an activity and functions as a kind of regulator for the activity. Furthermore, any action can be directed at any given activity. Operation is a surface behaviour and determines the means through which a particular action is carried out. Lantolf and Thorne (2006:226) summarise the main characteristics of the Activity Theory as follows:

- Within Activity theory, issues of mediation, the internalisation-externalisation dialectic, and object-orientedness (treating social and cultural properties as objective and meaningful) are foundational elements.
- The transformation of an object (a material object, a plan, a goal, etc.) into an outcome motivates an activity.
- Activity theory is not a static or purely descriptive approach; rather, the use of activity theory implies transformation and innovation.
- All activity systems are heterogeneous and multi-voiced and may include conflict and resistance as readily as cooperation and collaboration.
- Activity is central. There is no "student" or "teacher" or "technology" centred pedagogy from an activity theory perspective. Rather, agents play various roles and share an orientation to the activity.
- Activity systems do not work independently. Multiple activity systems are always at work and will have varying influences on the local or focus activity at hand.

4.5 Universal grammar and SLA

There seems to be common agreement among linguists that language universals or common features of languages exist. How else could it be possible that children acquire their L1 and are able to produce an infinite number of sentences most of which they have never heard before? The question arises to what extent languages of the world are structured according to universal principles. Research has shown that linguistic universals have the same effect on interlanguages as

they have on natural languages even though linguistic markedness cannot be the only factor affecting second language acquisition.

Universal Grammar (UG) is a concept that was introduced by Noam Chomsky and seeks to explain L1 acquisition. UG makes an attempt to integrate grammar, mind and language. Central claims are that all languages have a UG in common which does not need to be acquired and that all children are endowed with a language faculty, which allows them to acquire their L1. Thus one way of visualising Universal Grammar is to see it as part of the brain. Language is a separate mental organ and its development is influenced by other organs (Cook 1985:3-4). Universal Grammar is made up of all the language properties inherent in the human mind. It does not consist of only one particular grammar but of principles and parameters that apply to all grammars. If there really is a language faculty it is the solution to the logical problem. The logical problem is concerned with the question how children acquire a language at a very early stage given the facts that a language is a very complex construct and that they know whether a certain sentence is correct even though they have not heard it before. Linguists assumed that there must be some innate language learning construct or process which Chomsky called the “language faculty”. The language faculty is common to all human beings and is where the knowledge of language is stored in the individual mind. It is independent of other faculties such as mathematics and has unique properties of its own like locality or recursion not shared with other faculties. It can be thought of as a “mental organ” that “grows” (Cook 2007:49).

There are two main arguments for the existence of a Universal Grammar. The first is the logical problem of language learning or the poverty-of-the-stimulus argument. Children often hear incomplete or ungrammatical utterances and yet they do not incorporate them in their L1 system. They also receive simplified input that does not include all complexities of the language but children are able to form general principles and rules. Furthermore, they are able to understand and form an infinite number of sentences, which they have never heard before. The second argument is that there exist language universals across different

languages. Even though the languages of the word vary a great deal, children across the world show similar patterns of L1 acquisition. This leads to the assumption that language universals are innate in every child's mind.

According to Chomsky, acquiring a language means moving from an initial state (S_0) to a steady state (S_S) with principles, parameters and a filled lexicon. In between are many different states of language acquisition. The Language Acquisition Device is the procedure that stands between the input of linguistic data and the output. Further arguments, which support the existence of a language acquisition device, are (Saville-Troike 2006:21-24):

Constraints and principles cannot be learnt: Children are simply too young and their cognitive development does not allow for the learning of constraints and principles of a language. They are not able to think on a metacognitive level. Therefore the ability to use language with its constraints and principles must be innate in children.

Universal patterns of development cannot be explained by language-specific input: No matter what their mother tongue is, children acquire it in similar patterns all over the world. So there must be language universals which are innate in every child's mind.

Chomsky's work on Universal Grammar was revolutionary. Before him, linguists had been primarily occupied with collecting data and studying different patterns of grammars. Chomsky argued for the Language Acquisition Device (LAD). His argument and all his modules, theories and hypotheses underwent radical changes over the years. UG was developed on two levels. The first level concerned general concepts about language and language acquisition as the basis for the theory which did not change. The innateness of language and the distinction between competence and performance were developed further over the years but are present in all concepts. The second level consisted of the different concepts of description of syntax and changed over the years. The original model was developed in 1957 and was called "Syntactic structures".

Chomsky established the notion of “generative grammar” which was later changed into “transformational generative grammar”. Its most famous sentence was “Colourless green ideas sleep furiously”. Chomsky wanted to demonstrate that syntax is independent of semantics. In the 1980s a debate started (and is still going on) as to what extent the UG approach could be applied to second language acquisition. Bley-Vroman (in Eubank 1991) started this debate by postulating the “Fundamental Difference Hypothesis” which stated that L1 and L2 learning have little, if anything, in common. What most of the debates have in common is their understanding that Universal Grammar cannot provide a comprehensible theory of second language learning. Thus researchers acknowledge that UG is only one component of a comprehensible theory.

4.6 Input and interaction theories of second language acquisition

According to most SLA theories, input and interaction contribute to the learning of a language. The difference, however, lies in the importance that each theory of L2 learning attributes to input. In Behaviourist theories there is a direct relation between input and output. Through manipulation of the input, certain stimuli can be created which, provided feedback is available, contribute to learning a second language. The learning takes place through external factors and the learner is rather passive in the whole process. For mentalist theories input only sets in motion the language learning process. Learners have an innate capacity for learning the forms of any language. Input is not enough to acquire a language. The learner is not a passive medium but is actively involved in the learning process. In interactionist theories verbal interaction is most essential. Learners only get input through interaction. And this input contains all the information of the language in order to start the acquisition process. In sociocultural theories of SLA there is no distinction between input and output. According to Ellis (2008:206), sociocultural SLA “views language acquisition as an inherently social practise that takes place within interactions as learners are assisted to produce linguistic forms and functions that they are unable to perform by themselves”. Input which learners of a second language receive can appear in various forms:

Foreigner talk

Most native speakers adjust their speech when they talk to non-native speakers and according to Ferguson (1975 in Ellis 2008:214) even use ungrammatical input in form of omission of grammatical functions, expansion and replacement/rearrangement. Long (1983 in Ellis 2008:216) found four factors which may explain ungrammatical foreigner talk:

1) The learner's level of proficiency in L2 – ungrammatical foreigner talk is more likely when the learner's proficiency is low.
2) The status of the native speaker – ungrammatical foreigner talk is more likely when the native speaker is or thinks he or she is of higher status.
3) The native speaker has prior experience of using foreigner talk but only in the interaction with non-native speakers of low proficiency.
4) The extent to which the conversation is spontaneous – ungrammatical foreigner talk is less likely in planned discourse.

Foreigner talk is not always ungrammatical. It can also be grammatical which means that speakers use simplifications and elaborations when talking to non-native speakers. Simplification can be achieved through adjusting the speech rate and the articulation rate. Even though elaboration is the opposite of simplification, learners can benefit from it as native speakers try to use synonyms or explain certain terms or phrases in more detail.

Interlanguage talk

Interlanguage talk is the language learners speak among themselves. As there is no native speaker involved, interlanguage talk is less grammatical than foreigner talk or teacher talk. Porter (1986 in Ellis 2008:220-221) found interlanguage talk to be sociolinguistically deficient, as learners do not use politeness strategies to the same extent as native speakers. There is no sociocultural input that would be needed for language learning. However, learners only repeat a small amount of the faulty input. Compared to foreigner talk, interlanguage talk is superior as

learners, who are among themselves, try hard to find solutions for their common language problems.

4.6.1 The Frequency Hypothesis

Hatch and Wagner Gough (1976 in Ellis 2008:241) were the first to formulate the Frequency Hypothesis. It stated that the order of L2 acquisition is determined by the frequency of occurrence of different linguistic items in the input. Thereby the relationship between input frequency and the order of acquisition was examined. Over the years many studies have been carried out in order to find out whether there are any significant positive correlations between input frequency and accuracy. As they all yielded very different results it is not possible to draw a clear conclusion from them. However, all studies support the assumption that the input plays a significant – but not the only - role in the acquisition of an L2.

4.6.2 The Input Hypothesis

The Input Hypothesis was developed by Krashen and is dealt with under his "Monitor Model".

4.6.3 The Interaction Hypothesis

According to Ellis (2008:252), there are two versions of Long's Interaction Hypothesis. In the earlier version, Long (1983) stresses the importance of interaction for comprehensible input. The later version is closely linked to Hatch's work on discourse analysis and tried to explain how modified input contributes to the acquisition of a language given the internal mechanisms of the learners. In the earlier version Long (1983:127) makes it clear that linguistic input is not sufficient. Only when we analyse interactions between native and non-native speakers do we know more about the functions of the forms of language in discourse. Only through modified input can learners solve linguistic problems. As his early version of the Interaction Hypothesis was much criticised, Long updated it in1996. Whereas the earlier version just stated that comprehensible input has an effect on learning, the later version tried to show how input that is modified

through interaction leads to acquisition. Furthermore, the later version put emphasis on negative evidence ("direct or indirect evidence of what is ungrammatical" Long 1996:413 in Ellis 2008:255) and modified output. Even though the later version was also criticised, there is common agreement that any theory of L2 acquisition must define the role interaction plays and in this respect Long's Interaction Hypothesis seems to be the most promising.

4.6.4 The Comprehensible Output Hypothesis

Swain (1985:252) states that language learning may occur through producing spoken or written language. For her, "comprehensible output is a necessary mechanism of acquisition independent of the role of comprehensible input" (1985). Swain conducted studies with children in language immersion programs and found that comprehensible input alone was not enough for them to acquire high levels of grammatical and sociolinguistic competence. She concluded that in formal classroom settings, even in immersion programs, children do not have enough opportunity to talk and write and thus do not achieve native-like language competence. According to the Output Hypothesis, producing language serves L2 acquisition in several ways: it enhances fluency, it promotes noticing the gap between what a learner already knows and what he/she still needs to learn, it promotes hypothesis testing about comprehensibility or linguistic well-formedness and it allows learners to control and internalise linguistic knowledge. Swain (1995:128) sums up the Comprehensible Output Hypothesis as follows:

"…output may stimulate learners to move from the semantic, open-ended, non-deterministic, strategic processing prevalent in comprehension to the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production."

4.6.5 Gass' model of SLA

According to Ellis (2008:268), Gass' model is "the fullest and clearest statement of the roles played by input and interaction in L2 acquisition currently available". Gass (1997) acknowledges that there are different views of input but that input is probably the most important factor in second language acquisition. In her model

she proposes five stages (apperceived input, comprehended input, intake, integration, output) that try to explain how input is converted into output.

Apperceived input: Apperception is the first stage of input utilisation and means that the learner sees a gap in his/her knowledge of the L2. Gass (1997:4) defines apperception as “an internal cognitive act in which a linguistic form is related to some bit of existing knowledge (or gap in knowledge)”. Apperception prepares the input for further analysis. She calls this phase “enlightenment” or “selective cueing” because the learner realises that a knowledge gap has to be filled. Apperception is an internal cognitive act and describes what is being noticed by the learner. It is a first filter and prepares the input for further analysis. Apperceived input is that part of the language that is noticed by the learner because it shows certain particular features. Gass/Selinker (2008:482-484) list four factors - frequency, affect, prior knowledge, attention - which serve as input filters and are not necessarily independent.

Comprehended Input: There is a difference between “comprehensible input “and “comprehended input”. Comprehensible input is controlled by the speaker, whereas with comprehended input the “focus is on the hearer and the extent to which he or she understands”. Furthermore, “comprehension” is important. Comprehension, however, is seen as a multi-layer concept and not in Krashen’s sense of the word (“something is either understood or is not”). Learners might understand one layer of meaning but not another one. Comprehended input is the first stage of analysis and results from apperception. It is learner-controlled meaning where the learner decides what is being understood. The level of analysis of input determines whether comprehended input will result in intake.

Intake: Gass (1997:5) defines intake as “the process of assimilating linguistic material; it refers to the mental activity that mediates input and grammars”. In this stage psycholinguistic processing takes place. The learner compares his/her existing rules with the new ones, generalises and forms memory traces. Intake is a mental activity and the stage between input and grammar. Intake occurs when the learner starts to assimilate new language features. Different mediators, like

knowledge of the L1 and the L2, features that are part of a UG, information that is matched up against prior knowledge and backdropping of the existing internal grammatical rules, determine what features will be taken in by the learner. Furthermore, in the phase of intake generalisations and overgeneralisations occur and fossilisation takes place.

Integration: Integration consists of two components – the development of second language grammar and storage. Integration takes place when the input has been processed and matched against existing knowledge. There are four possible outcomes of input. The first is hypothesis confirmation or rejection. Learners confirm or reject their existing knowledge on the basis of new input. The second is apparent non-use of the input. This concerns input that is already stored in the learner's existing knowledge. New input strengthens or reconfirms a hypothesis. The third is storage. Learners store information that is new to them. In a later stage they retrieve this information in order to clarify the meaning of it and to confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis that he/she has built. Storage is a concept that is mostly applied to vocabulary. A fourth possibility is that the learner makes no use of the input.

Output: Output is not really a stage in the acquisition process but rather a means of testing hypotheses. Learners use their knowledge, get feedback and modify their hypothesis. Output "necessitates a feedback loop to comprehended input". Output has two roles. First, it serves as a means for testing hypotheses and second, as a means for syntactic, rather than only semantic analysis of language. The output, however, is not identical with the grammar of learners as it is largely dependent on personality factors. Gass/Selinker (2008:490) state that, "the output component represents more than the product of language knowledge; it is an active part of the entire learning process".

4.7 Neurosciences and SLA

In recent years, researchers have become more and more interested in the way the brain works and contributes to the learning of a second language. Neuroscientific SLA and traditional SLA try to explain the same observable behaviours. But whereas mainstream SLA is concerned with psycholinguistic mechanisms and processes, neuroscientific SLA attempts to explain the neural mechanisms responsible for language learning. In order to get a comprehensive perspective of the language acquisition process, neuroscientific information needs to be incorporated in theories of SLA. The better we understand how the brain works, the more efficiently we can work towards a comprehensive theory of language learning. As soon as researchers acknowledge that neuroscientific findings contribute to a better understanding of the language learning process, they need to (1) be aware of recent neuroscientific investigations, (2) explore possible implications of relevance to language acquisition, and (3) incorporate a degree of neurobiological reality into their perception of the language acquisition process (Jacob and Schumann 1992:283).

Neurobiology is concerned with the study of the nervous system and how it interacts with the environment. It consists of various interrelated subdisciplines, like neuroanatomy (the structural architecture necessary for other subdisciplines), neurochemistry (examination of chemical systems and processes), cognitive neuroscience (analysis the biological bases of like language), computational neuroscience (interaction of neural networks to process information) and neurolinguistics (analysis of language disorders caused by brain damage). Human learning within a neurobiological framework sees human language acquisition not distinct from the acquisition of any other skill or knowledge. Neuosciences have not been too prominent among researchers in the Universal Grammar tradition. A plausible explanation is the fact that at present there does not exist neurobiological evidence of the existence of a language acquisition device or Universal Grammar. Rather linguistic functioning takes place in various regions of the brain that are also responsible for non-

linguistic functioning. It has not been possible to prove which regions of the brain and which neural pathways are activated by specific L2 behaviours (Ellis 2008:767). Some years ago researchers, for example, also assumed that there were hemisphere differences in L1 and L2 representations. Recent views claim that the same mechanisms are at work for L1 and L2 learning.

4.8 Social models and theories of SLA

Learning a language always takes place in a certain setting or milieu that is hard to define as it varies enormously within itself. The setting always determines the use of language and the acquisition of language and has influence on the attitude of the learners, on their choice of reference group and their learning opportunities. A distinction is made between natural and educational settings. Natural settings are all situations where a language is acquired outside a school or university. People who acquire a language in a natural setting usually reach a better L2 proficiency with regard to oral fluency and pragmatic ability. Learners in an educational setting frequently display a better grammatical knowledge. However, it is very difficult to compare results as the differences in quality and quantity of each setting are striking. Within the natural learning milieu, four different language settings can be distinguished:

1) Majority language settings: The target language is the native language of the country
2) Official language settings: The L2 functions as an official language
3) International settings: The L2 is used for interpersonal communications
4) Minority L2 settings: Speakers of the dominant language are learning the minority language

Among the social aspects that play a role in second language acquisition are sex and gender, social class, ethnicity and attitude and social distance.

Sex and Gender

Ellis (2008) distinguishes between “sex” and “gender”. Sex is a biological factor whereas gender is a social distinction. Studies that analysed differences in

language acquisition showed mixed results. There is even some evidence against the widespread belief that women are better language learners. This might be true when it comes to memorising complex forms but not when it comes to computing compositional rules.

Social Class

Four groups of social class can be distinguished: lower class, working class, lower middle class and upper middle class. These classes, however, have lost their clarity and therefore social class can be less indicative for success in language learning than in the past. Especially in classroom settings, studies show that children from the middle class outperform those of the lower- and working class. There are other studies, however, that show the contrary. Ellis (2008:317) assumes that “it is the particular experience of the world which members of the different social classes are likely to have that are important for acquisition.”

Ethnicity and attitude

Ellis (2008:318) lists three important points which determine the relationship between ethnic identity and the acquisition of an L2: (1) Ethnic identity is both a social and an individual construct and for that reason alone it is of special importance for SLA. (2) Acquiring an L2 is likely to involve some change or addition to the learner’s sense of identity. (3) A change or addition to the learner’s identity may involve the learner overcoming a number of social obstacles and the extent to which this is achieved will affect how successful the L2 is acquired.

A normative view on ethnicity deals with the “cultural distance”. Learners, who have positive attitudes towards the target language culture, perform better than learners who have negative attitudes. The social-psychological view on ethnicity looks at the role of attitudes. Learners who have a positive attitude towards their own culture as well as the target language culture perform well in the L2 but also maintain their L1. Successful L2 learning is also possible when learners do not

want to integrate into the target language culture. Learners who are open to the target language community perform better than learners who do not want to mix with speakers of the L2.

Social distance

Social distance is concerned with the social factors that influence the degree to which a second language is learnt. It deals with the individual learner's relation to the social group that speaks a different language. It is assumed that the greater the social difference between the two social groups, the harder it is for the learners of a second language to acquire this language. According to Schumann (2006), difference is influenced by various factors. Groups can be politically, culturally, technically or economically dominant, non-dominant or subordinate in relation to each other. Only when the two groups are non-dominant, does learning take place as social distance becomes minimal. The same holds true for life-style or values of a group. Social distance is minimal when acculturation takes place. In situations in which learners have to assimilate or preserve their own cultural values, learning the target language will be a problem.

Other factors affecting social distance are cohesiveness (when members of a group remain separate from the target language group), congruence (differences between cultures opposed to similarities between cultures), the attitude of the two groups towards each other and the second language learners' group intended length of residence in the target language area. Social distance is closely related to social identity. Norton (1997:419) states that, "speech, speakers, and social relationships are inseparable". For her, social identity is complex, contradictory and multifaceted. It is dynamic across time and place, which can be observed when people move to a new country, institution or community. They need to find their place in a new social order. Furthermore, social identity constructs and is constructed by language and therefore must have a place in classroom practice.

4.8.1 Giles and Byrne – Intergroup Model

Central to Giles' and Byrne's work is the so-called factor of "ethno-linguistic vitality". The more of these factors a particular group possesses, the more vitality it is said to have. Ethnolinguistic vitality is derived from the three variables status (economic, political, social, sociohistorical and language status variables), demography (how many numbers in a group and how wide their distribution) and institutional support (representation of the ethnic group in the media, education, government, industry, religion and culture). Apart from ethnolinguistic vitality, motivation is also a determining factor for the intergroup model. The model deals with "factors affecting individuals' strength of ethnic identification and their perceptions of the social relationships operating between ethnic in- and outgroups" (Giles/Byrne 1982:34).

Giles' and Byrne's (1982) five conditions under which members of a subordinate group will most likely acquire native-like proficiency in the dominant language:

- when ingroup identification is weak and/or L1 is not a salient dimension of ethnic group membership
- when quiescent inter-ethnic comparisons exist
- when perceived ingroup vitality is low
- when perceived ingroup boundaries are soft and open
- when strong identification exists with many other social categories, each of which provides adequate group identities and a satisfactory intragroup status.

In contrast, learners do not feel a strong motivation to learn the L2 when:

- ingroup identification is strong and language is a salient dimension of ethnic group membership
- insecure inter-ethnic comparisons exist
- perceived ingroup vitality is high
- perceived ingroup boundaries are hard and closed

- weak identification exists with few other social categories, each of which provides inadequate group identities and an unsatisfactory intragroup status.

4.8.2 Socio-educational model

In his social-educational model, Gardner (1985) tries to explain how setting is related to proficiency. He believes that the social and cultural milieu in which the learners grow up determine their attitudes towards language and culture. Language is the only skill taught that involves patterns of a different culture. The social and cultural milieu also contribute largely to the learners' motivation of L2 learning. The learners who are willing and motivated to integrate themselves into the new language group and culture develop a high level of L2 proficiency as well as better attitudes. Gardner (1985:146) states that the relative degree of success will be influenced to some extent by the individual's attitudes toward the other community or to other communities in general as well as by the beliefs in the community which are relevant to the language learning process". If the general belief is that the language is hard to learn, the language learners will not show good results.

According to the socio-educational model, there is an indirect relationship between the social/cultural milieu and L2 proficiency as well as between attitudes and proficiency. In contrast there is a direct relationship between integrative motivation and proficiency. The model operates with four classes of variables: the social milieu (cultural beliefs), individual differences (intelligence, language aptitude, motivation, situational anxiety), language acquisition contexts (formal language training, informal language experience) and outcomes (linguistic, non-linguistic). The socio-educational model is a dynamic model. Language learner behaviour is influenced by cognitive and affective variables. However, it does not explain how factors like attitude, motivation and achievement change in different settings.

4.9 SLA theories influenced by cultural factors

For learners of a second language it is not enough to master the formal aspects of the language. It is equally important to understand the cultural framework in which the language to be learnt is spoken. Several theories of second language acquisition have been developed which try to incorporate cultural factors.

4.9.1 Pidginisation and Creolisation

In 1971, David Smith suggested that pidginisation and creolisation provide laboratory situations to study second language acquisition. A pidgin is no mother tongue of any speaker but a contact language between two groups of which one is socially dominant. The process through which native speakers of two different languages create a contact language for communicative purposes is called pidginisation. Pidgins are restricted to communication and produce simplified and reduced interlanguage. Simplifications and reductions that are found in second language learner's interlanguage are similar to those of pidgins. Schumann (1978) undertook an extensive study in which he related pidgins to second language acquisition research. He studied a group of six Spanish-speaking learners of English. His main focus was on Alberto, a 33-year-old lower-class Costa Rican polisher who lived in the US for four months. He found that the learning process of Alberto resembled that of pidginisation. He found the following resemblances between pidgins and Alberto's speech (1978:260):

- use of "no", as in "I no see": a single pre-verbal negative form is typical of pidgins
- lack of inversion, as in "Where the paper is?": this corresponds to the tendency for pidgins to have a single word order and to prefer stable relationships between form and meaning
- lack of auxiliaries "She crying": pidgins too lack auxiliaries
- lack of possessive "-s", as in "The king food": this corresponds to the typical lack of inflectional morphology in pidgins

- unmarked forms of the verb, as in “Yesterday I talk with one friend”: lack of present “-s” and of past tense “-ed” and so forth is again similar to the lack of inflections in pidgins
- lack of subject pronouns, as in “No have holidays”: this is similar to the reduced pronoun system of pidgins.

The formation and use of a pidgin language can be seen as a form of non-acculturation. People who remain in a pidgin language state refuse to merge with the different culture and try to maintain their own cultural identity. When a whole group of people uses a pidgin as their first language, the pidgin becomes creolisised. It no longer is just a means for communication but a means for establishing social identities and expressing psychological needs. A similar process can be observed with learners of a second language. First they just want to communicate and their interlanguage has a simplified morphology, reduced vocabulary and deletion of certain grammatical transformations. Their speech “will complicate and expand in ways similar to creolization” (Schumann 1974:150).

4.9.2 Acculturation

Schumann explains the success and failure of second language learning through the Acculturation Model. Acculturation is a natural model of second language acquisition that is based on social-psychology in natural settings. Schumann tried to analyse and explain how immigrants acquire the language of the majority language setting. Schumann (1978, 1986) argues that social factors and affective factors combined as a single variable is, “the major causal variable in SLA” (1978:29). Acculturation for him is the “social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language group” (1978:29). A learner will only learn the second language to the degree he is willing and able to acculturate. There are two types of acculturation:

Type one acculturation: The learner acquires the second language through social contact with the target group

Type two acculturation: In this case the learner consciously or unconsciously wants to adopt the life style and values of the speakers of the target language.

With this distinction Schumann wants to stress that the social and psychological contact with the speakers of the target language is the essential component in acculturation whereas the wish to adopt the life style and values of the target language group are not prerequisites for successful acquisition of the second language.

Social variables that constitute acculturation:

- Social dominance patterns: political, cultural, technical or economic dominance over a particular language group does not lead to learning
- Assimilation: to give up your own life-style
- Preservation: to maintain one's own life-style
- Adaption: to maintain one's life-style but to also adapt to the life-style of the target language group
- Enclosure: to which degree the second language learning group and the target language group share the same churches, schools, clubs, recreational facilities, crafts, professions and trades
- Cohesiveness and size
- Congruence or similarity
- Attitude
- Intended length of residence

Affective variables that constitute acculturation:

- Language shock: language learners may fear that they are ridiculed when they speak the target language
- Cultural shock: the "anxiety resulting from the disorientation encountered upon entering a new culture"
- Motivation: how motivated is the learner to acquire the target language
- Ego-Permeability: inhibitions to language learning, a child-like behaviour would facilitate language learning

Schumann (1978:34) states that “if language shock and cultural shock are not overcome and if the learner does not have sufficient and appropriate motivation and ego-permeability, then he/she will not fully acculturate and hence will not acquire the second language fully”. However, second language acquisition is only one aspect of acculturation. How well a learner acquires a second language depends on how well he/she acculturates to the target language group. The problem with Schumann’s Acculturation Model is the fact that it is only applicable to immigrants or people who stay in the country of the target language for some time. What the model tries to attempt, however, is to integrate a social and a psychological perspective in the process of second language acquisition.

4.9.3 The optimal distance model

Brown (1980) poses the question whether there is a critical period hypothesis that is independent of age but dependent upon different socio-cultural factors. Given the fact that cultural distance is an important feature of the optimal stage of learning, he termed his model the “optimal distance model” of second language acquisition. The model combines four factors – acculturation (excitement, culture shock, culture stress and assimilation/adaption), anomie (people are in a state of “in-between”; they do not feel at home with their mother tongue any more but they have not fully acculturated in the new language culture), social distance (the cognitive and affective proximity of two cultures which come into contact within an individual; the greater the social distance between cultures the more difficult it is to learn the language of this culture) and perceived social distance (the individual perceived social distance determines whether a learner learns a second language easily). By explaining language mastery or failure through acculturation, anomie, social distance and perceived social distance, Brown wanted to show that age is not necessarily the only factor that determines whether adults acquire a second language. The model, however, is restricted to learning the language within the environment of the second language.

4.10 Attempts towards a comprehensive theory of SLA

Even though Krashen's Comprehensible Input Hypothesis meant a huge step forward in the field of second language acquisition research, it was clear that it was not the end of the story. Something "more complete and empirically more verified and verifiable" (Block 2003:26) was necessary. Among others, Gass and Spolsky attempted to formulate a comprehensive theory of SLA which takes into account all elements that play a role in the language acquisition process.

A comprehensible theory of second language acquisition needs to take interaction, output, the L1, developmental patterns in L2, interlanguage, variability, social factors, Universal Grammar and the different psychological variables into account. Gass' model attempts to do just that. The model tries to answer the question what a learner "must do to convert input to output" (Gass/Selinker 2008:480). It consists of five stages – apperceived input, comprehended input, intake, integration and output (further details can be found in chapter 4.6.5).

Spolsky attempted to put the "state of the art" knowledge about second language acquisition into a single, general theory because "a growing collection of empirical data encourages us to believe that it is possible to develop such a theory" (Spolsky 1985:269). The model is very general. It covers all kinds of second language learning – by children and adults, formally and informally. He uses the term "theory" to mean "a hypothesis or set of hypotheses that has been or can be verified empirically" (1988). The basis for the theory is the belief that there is an unlimited number of ways to acquire a language. Spolsky's proposed model consists of several clusters of interrelated conditions or factors as language learning in general is the result of the interaction and integration of different and not a single factor. The central question in his theory (1985, 1988) is - who learns how much of what language under what conditions? There are five features that make Spolsky's theory strong:

1) The combination of all aspects of second language learning into a single theory.
2) The clarity of the nature of the goals and outcomes of learning.
3) The integrated and interactive nature.
4) The design as a preference model.
5) The establishment of a theory of second language learning in a social context.

The fact that it is a preference model means that it consists of several clusters of interrelated conditions. Spolsky (1989) lists 74 conditions that are relevant for second language learning and that all interact to form a general theory. There are three different kinds of conditions: necessary conditions (without them, learning is impossible), graded conditions (there is relationship between the extent to which the condition is met and the nature of the outcome) and typicality conditions (they apply typically but not necessarily). Spolsky's general theory has a few drawbacks. It could be considered a list of conditions rather than a theory. Also the interrelations between these conditions are not very clear. To specify them, however, would result in a theory that is too complex to work with. Furthermore, it could be argued that the conditions are far too general to be of value.

5 Foreign football players in the Premier League

Until now, the theoretical basis for this thesis has been presented which consisted of an overview of the field of ESP, aspects of individual learners' differences as well as second language acquisition theories. As this thesis attempts to provide the basis for a teaching and learning resource for Premier League football players, it is essential to present insights into the particular learning environment of foreign football players. The history of the English Premier League shows when foreign players began to play in the league. These foreign players and their linguistic and cultural challenges are in the centre of the empirical study of this thesis.

5.1 The English Premier League

Before dealing with foreign players and especially foreign academy players in the Premier League, it is important to understand the nature of English football and why it is different from other football cultures around the world. The following overview of English football highlights the most important historical steps towards the establishment of one of the most famous football leagues in the world.

Every major football nation has its particular football culture. Someone who is not interested in football may not be aware that there are differences between the football played in England and elsewhere. England's football is said to be faster and more goal oriented than football played on mainland Europe. Therefore foreign players are faced with at least two main challenges. They need to adapt to a new language as well as to a totally new way of playing the game. English footballers are more aggressive on the pitch and involve themselves in a real "fight". Traditionally, English players have not been the players with the fine technique but the hard defenders. Tackles that have been taken over from rugby are frequently used. But no matter how hard they fight, fairness is always the highest principle. Dives, staginess and feigning injuries after minor tackles are detested in English football. Even the referees interpret the rules differently than, say, in mainland Europe. Tackles that are punished by a yellow card for example

in Germany are in many cases not even worth a whistle in England. The most distinct feature of English football, however, is its pace.

It is often said that England is the “cradle” or the “motherland” of football. This might be true for modern history but it does the true origin of football no credit as it goes as far back as ancient times. All around the world countries have since claimed to have “invented” a sport where a ball needs to be kicked into the opponent’s goal. In the 12th century there is evidence of football being played in England. This game involved many players of rival groups of towns and cities. These were often very violent games which were played around Shrovetide and became known as “Shrovetide Football”. By the 19th century the rulers of Great Britain had successfully banned football. The game only survived because it was played in Britain’s public schools. There, the more recent history of football started even though the games that the elite in public school played were very brutal and followed hardly any rules. During the first half of the 19th century, things began to change. Self-discipline and rules were introduced and team work brought a new spirit to the game. In 1863 different rules in different schools and the emergence of football clubs made it necessary to found the Football Association (FA). Twelve clubs were members at that time. Within only a decade, the organisation grew from twelve to 128 clubs. Its aim was the establishment of universally accepted rules for the game of football and this eventually led to the first official “international” match between England and Scotland in 1872. In 1871, Charles Alcock, FA’s secretary, proposed to launch the Football Association Challenge Cup (the FA Cup). In 1872, fifteen clubs took part in this first competition. In 1888 the Football League was founded as football increasingly became more professional and organised. As more and more people wanted to watch the games, Saturday was established as a half-day holiday. The first matches under the League rules were played on September 8th, 1888. In 1892/93 a second division was added to the league and raised the question of promotion and relegation. At the end of the 19th century, football had become the most popular sport and in 1905 the FA counted 10 000 member clubs. During the World Wars, the league stopped its matches and in 1946 the League restarted

again. During the following years, there were only small changes. The divisions were expanded and new divisions were formed.

The English Premier League is one of the world's most famous, most attractive and most lucrative football leagues. It is followed by more than half a billion people in 202 countries but this has not always been the case. In the 1980s, the league was faced with problems concerning poor stadium attendance, poor facilities and hooliganism. Additional tragedies brought the league to its lowest and hardest times. In 1985 English teams were banned from European competitions after the death of 39 fans at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels at the European Cup Final between Liverpool and Juventus Turin. In 1989 another 96 fans had died and more than 150 were injured during the FA Cup semi-final between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest. Fans who had no tickets and others who were too late for kick-off, flooded the stadium. People were pressed against the fence that separated the fans from the pitch. Lord Taylor conducted an inquiry and what became known as the Taylor report lead to the introduction of all-seater stadia and the removal of fences and barriers at the front of the stands. After these tragedies and the hooligan problem, English football needed radical restructuring, which was enormously expensive. The solution was television broadcast rights and commercial independence from the Football League and Football Association. Furthermore, success on the pitch (England reached the semi-finals in the 1990 FIFA World Cup) reversed the downward trend. In February 1992, 22 football clubs decided to establish a new league breaking away from The Football League. This new league – The Premier League – operates within a single division, is owned by the now 20 member clubs (in 1995 the number of clubs was reduced to 20), with each club being a shareholder and having a vote on changes regarding the league structure. The teams play 38 games each during a season that lasts from August to May.

A central element of the Premier League is its sponsoring. From 1993 till 2001 it was sponsored by Carling, 2001 till 2004 by Barclaycard and from then on it has been sponsored by Barclays. Thus, it is officially called the Barclays Premier

League in which year after year many foreign players come to play. They come from all corners of the world and do not necessarily speak English. Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001:1) state that, “the tradition of cosmopolitan teams is deeply rooted in world football history. From the very start of the game, men have moved across national borders, and from city to city, to play football”. At the beginnings of the game, competitions and prestige was reserved for the aristocratic and noble classes. Foreigners and outsiders were not allowed to take part as “participation was not the result of individual choice but the affirmation of a tangible and permanent anchorage in a group” (Lanfranchi/Taylor 2001: 17). Things changed at the end of the 19th century. Swiss bankers and managers started to work in foreign countries. They not only exported their business knowledge but also the popular game of football. These migrants founded the first football clubs and were the first foreign players in continental Europe. In Switzerland especially it was popular to take over the “Englishness” of the game and with it the language as well. Clubs outside Britain even adopted the English translation of their town in the name of the club.

With the start of the First World War, the importance of foreign players and coaches began to decline. National leagues emancipated themselves from British football. It was around the 1990s that football migration (also to England) became very popular again. Furthermore, the Bosman ruling of the European Court of Justice on December 15th, 1995 contributed to the many foreign players in European leagues. Until then, every country had quotas concerning the number of foreigners who could play in national leagues. The outcome of the Bosman ruling was that community law had to be applied to sport as well. This meant that quotas for football players were contrary to the free movement of workers. From this ruling on, restrictions for EU-citizens do not exist any longer but the situation is still different for non-EU citizens. As Lanfranchi/Taylor (2001:229) point out, the opening of football borders as a result of Bosman “needs to be considered alongside broader political and economic developments in different parts of the world, particularly Eastern Europe, Africa and South America”. Due to their poor economic situations, countries in these regions are

unable to retain their youngsters. A lot of the Premier League clubs want these cheap players under contract.

Thanks to extensive sponsoring from many sides, English clubs are able to pay high transfer fees and wages for players. When the Premier League was established in 1992, there were only 11 non-British or Irish players and in 1999 there were already more than 200. Today around 400 foreign players are active in Britain's highest league. There are not only foreign players but squads even have foreign managers and are owned by foreigners. Green (2009:6) reports that the number of British players in the Premier League has dropped from 462 to 246 in the season 2006/2007. The picture becomes even darker when one looks at English players in specific positions:

	1993	***2006/2007***
central defenders	72	34
wingers	36	16
midfielders	93	44
goalkeepers	outnumbered 2 to 1 by foreign players	

Table 8: English players in the Premier League – A comparison between the seasons 1993 and 2006/2007

In December 1999 Chelsea became the first Premier League club to start the game with a squad that consisted entirely of foreign players. In February 2005 Arsenal named a completely foreign 16-man squad for a match. They continued this trend and in 2008 the Arsenal team looked like this[4]:

Jens Lehmann – Germany Abou Diaby – France	Gilberto – Brazil Johan Djourou – Switzerland

[4] http://www.arsenal.com/squad.asp?thisNav=First+Team

(Website accessed on 5. 2. 2008)

Bacary Sagna – France	Lukasz Fabianski – Poland
Cesc Fabregas – Spain	Gael Clichy – France
Kolo Toure – Ivory Coast	Manuel Almunia – Spain
Philippe Senderos – Switzerland	Emmanuel Adebayor – Togo
Tomas Rosicky – Czech Republic	Nicklas Bendtner – Denmark
Eduardo – Brazil	Emmanuel Eboue – Ivory Coast
William Gallas – France	Armand Traore – France
Robin Van Persie – Netherlands	*Justin Hoyte – GB*
Alexander Hleb – Belarus	*Theo Walcott – GB*
Denilson – Brazil	*Kerrea Gilbert – GB*
Mathieu Flamini – France	*Mark Randall – GB*
Alexandre Song – Cameroon	

Table 9: The Arsenal team – season 2008

The first team consisted of fourteen foreign nationalities and only four players from England. One could argue that these players do not have any language problems because most of them can talk in their native languages. From interviews with coaching staff in England I discovered that the preferred language for communication is English however. Not every English team is comprised of fourteen nationalities but it is obvious that year after year millions of Pounds are spent to tempt foreign players to the Premiere League. This trend cannot only be seen at senior level but already at academy level where the boys are between 15/16 and 18 years of age. According to Lewis (2007), English football is spending 3.3 per cent of its income on youth development.

5.2 The football academy

In the 1980s new approaches, programs and structures, along with increased financial support, paved the way for professional youth football. Howard

Wilkinson was then technical director of the FA and with his *Charter for Quality* (1997) provided the basis for the introduction of football academies. This was necessary because, among others, there had been no specific criteria for facilities, game fixtures (sometimes the boys played 60 games and more a year), no defined learning outcomes within the learning programs and no commonly agreed football calendar. Furthermore, there was no structure among staff which meant that there was no requirement for full-time staff, goalkeeping staff, an education and welfare officer or team management. As in many countries, coaches let youth players only play in the first team if there was no money left to buy senior players.

Compared with other football nations, England had the problem that before the set up of football academies, the boys spent a lot less time with their clubs than their foreign counterparts. This left the English with less technically proficient youth players. Before the Charter, professional clubs could only work with players from the age of 14 and only for a limited amount of time each week. The aim of the *Charter for Quality* was to establish an efficient football education for children and exceptionally talented players while not compromising their overall education and welfare. Ideas for the Charter were borrowed from overseas. The examples of Ajax Amsterdam (Holland), FC Barcelona (Spain), FC Parma (Italy), Inter Milan (Italy) and Sao Paolo FC (Brazil) were studied and the most suitable and feasible ideas were introduced into the new academy system.

In 1997 the FA Premier Youth League was founded. One year later the Football Association's Academy system was introduced and the league renamed FA Premier Academy League. In the season 2004-2005 new reforms were introduced which retain their validity to the present day. There is now a single Under-18 competition and an Under-16 level (played as friendlies). The Academy League is the top level of youth football in England. It consists of 41 teams of Premier League Academies and Football League clubs. The most talented youth and adolescent football players of the country (and also from abroad) play in football leagues. It is an elite talent program that exists alongside excellence

programs for clubs, which do not want to become a licensed Academy. The Football Association (FA) grants 5 year licences to clubs that prove their professionalism and quality.

In the season 2009-2010 the Under-18 league looked like this[5]:

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Arsenal	Aston Villa	Blackburn Rovers	Barnsley
Charlton Athletic	Birmingham City	Bolton Wanderers	Derby County
Chelsea	Bristol City	Crewe Alexandra	Huddersfield Town
Crystal Palace	Cardiff City	Everton	Leeds United
Fulham	Coventry City	Liverpool	Middlesbrough
Ipswich Town	Leicester City	Manchester City	Newcastle United
Norwich City	Milton Keynes Dons	Manchester United	Nottingham Forest
Portsmouth	Reading	Stoke City	Sheffield Wednesday
Southampton	Tottenham Hotspur	West Bromwich Albion	Sheffield United
West Ham United	Watford	Wolverhampton Wanderers	Sunderland

Table 10: Under 18 league – season 2009/2010

The Charter lists detailed criteria which have to be met in order to become a licensed football Academy. Among these criteria which have to be met by academies are the following:

[5] Taken from "The Premier Academy League" http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Premier_Academy_League (accessed 16.8.09)

- Academy members are restricted to only playing games for the club itself and their school. This is designed to ensure that youngsters are not playing too much football.
- All coaches must hold UEFA Level 3 coaching licences or higher.
- The student to staff ratio must not be greater than 10 to one.
- The club must be able to provide high-quality facilities, not just in terms of outdoor and indoor playing areas, but all development needs including medical and education.
- A minimum of 3 hours a week training (9-12 years), 5 hours a week (12-16 years) and 12 hours a week (17/18 years) must be provided for all registered players.
- Players in groups U9 to U12 must reside within one hour's travelling time and those in age groups U13 to U16 within one and a half hours travelling time of the Football Academy at which they are registered.
- The games programme in the regular season only permits matches organised between academies.
- There is also a limit to the number of games the boys are allowed to play for the club up to the age of 16, with a minimum limit of 24 and maximum of 30.
- Clubs must pay great attention to the physical, medical, educational, emotional and social needs of the players, and highly qualified staff are employed in these areas to provide the requisite support.
- Clubs are required to offer the holistic approach to football development. This means that members should receive support for their academic and life-skills needs as well as their football development.

All English football academies provide the young players with good (in some cases even state-of-the art) facilities and match performance analyses and care for their diet, nutrition, physiology and psychology. Additionally, every academy makes sure that the boys get a sound academic education. The programs within the academies are different. Until the age of 16 every academy works together

with the schools the boys attend. After that the boys receive a full time scholarship at the academy and from then on they follow the academic career path designed for them at their respective academy.

No matter how young, as soon as a player joins an academy he needs to be registered. This registration applies for players between the age of 9 and 18 years and, depending on their age, they are signed on a one- or two-year agreement. From the age of 17 they can sign professional contracts with the club. This "registration" of a player means that he is quite firmly tied to his club. Clubs, through their academies, can now recruit children on a grand scale. For the academies, it is not only important that the boys are talented footballers but also that they have "commitment, self-discipline and unshakeable determination"[6]. What the Charter failed to address was the "poaching" of players. As all clubs want to have the best players, they developed methods – some perfectly legal, others not so – to sign players from competing clubs. It is very painful – not only from a football but also a financial viewpoint – for clubs to lose players at the age of 16 or 17, who they have spent time developing over many years. As talented young players "cost" vast sums of money, many of them already have agents who negotiate the best deals for them. What happens is that small clubs always lose their most talented players to the big clubs which is not the best motivation for the coaches and the academy staff who have put a lot of effort into the player's development.

The *Charter for Quality* was essential in the development of the football academies in England. In the football season 2008/2009 (11 years after the publication of the charter) around 10 000 boys played and trained in English football academies and centres of excellence. But this high number of boys means that only a few of them will get taken on by the first team of their club at the end of their scholarship at 18 or 19. The goal of every football academy in

[6] http://www.premierleague.com/page/AcademicsPL/0,,12306~1078162,00.html (accessed 16.8.09)

England is to produce players that make it to the first team. Even though performance is of high importance, winning and results are not everything. It is rather the development of the players that is the primary goal. Apart from that, it is important to develop players who can save the club expenditure, can earn the club revenue in transfer fees and can make a career outside football. Green (2009:30) nevertheless sees the whole situation quite critically. Through the Charter the clubs gained more power as they can now recruit “boys between nine and 19 years of age and run their academies primarily in the best interests of the clubs. This has not necessarily been in the best interests of the national game, nor, say some, in the best interest of the children. It has bred ferocious competition among clubs to sign up the best boys as young as possible and has had a profound impact on the way English football develops its talent.”

Stratton et al. (2004:122) cite a study by Ward et al. (2004) whereby players who are recruited by Premier League Academies in England at 16 years of age had mostly started playing at the age of 6 years. They then devoted the next 10 years with an average of 15 hours per week to practising activities related to football. So most likely they have had about 10 000 hours of practice before their debut in the first team. Young academy players who still attend local schools come to the academy (usually three times a week) for training sessions. After they have finished school, around the age of 16, they might be offered a scholarship for an additional three years.

I was very impressed by the three academies I personally visited in England. They all have very high standards. Geographically, the football academies are situated in the outskirts of or outside the cities of the respective clubs. This remoteness makes it quite hard for the boys to do all the usual silly things that adolescent boys usually do. When you arrive at the premises of the academies, it is stunning to see how many training pitches are at their disposal. For somebody who has coached boys at a club in a rural village in Austria, this is like a dream come true. Even though England is not really blessed with the climate, it is

impressive to see the great condition of these pitches. Regarding training grounds, academy players and coaches find superb conditions.

What is missing, though, is enough opportunity for the academy players to play at senior level. In one of the best leagues in the world, the bar is very high for young talent. Since there are so many expensive foreign players employed, coaches let them play and not the young players who need to get the experience. The season 2008/2009 illustrates this problem very well: 75 per cent of the starting line-ups in Premier League matches were made up of foreign players whereas no 17 or 18 year old started a match in the Premiership. What happens is that many youth players get their football experience in the Championship. And the chances for young players do not seem to be on the increase in the coming years. At the moment with 40 academies and 48 centres of excellence, a total of 88 professional clubs are chasing young players when only one in a hundred has a chance to signing a professional contract at 18.

There are also critical voices questioning the academy system. Wilkinson included in his Charter the internationally recognised criteria that it takes an estimated 10 000 hours of practice and quality training time to develop an elite performer. These hours cannot be attained at academies where the boys do not only have a ball on their feet but spend a lot of time with football-related things, for example, match analysis. So this formal structure does not necessarily produce better players than the more informal football which boys play on their own. It is not an English but a European phenomenon that kids do not spend enough time outside running and playing around with a ball. The generation of “street footballers” is clearly a by-gone in central Europe. But what the formalised system also produces are children who are disappointed because they do not make it to the academy. Academy coaches have to be very careful not to promise young boys anything at the age of 6 or 7, in order not to disappoint them and make them lose their enthusiasm for football. The pressure for the clubs to find talent as soon as possible prevents an alternative system whereby boys until the age of 11 train with their local clubs and come into the academy once a

week. Due to the regulations of the English Football Association, it is often cheaper for clubs to look for talent beyond the national boarders than to “buy” English boys from competing academies.

5.2.1 Structure of football academies

In general, every academy has the aim of developing adolescent boys into Premier League football players. In order to do this they have to invest a lot of money, energy and dedication.

All academies have different departments. Usually they look like this:

- Technical (Coaching)
- Identification and Recruitment (Scouting)
- Medical (Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation)
- Sport Science (Psychology, Physiology and Performance Analysis)
- Education and Welfare (Life skills, general and specific education)
- Administration and Facilities Management

Everton Academy[7] describes six steps to success which can be applied to and are representative for any football academy in England:

- *Identifying*: Our scouts attend matches throughout this country and abroad.
- *Recruiting*: We only sign players with real potential.
- *Coaching*: We place players with qualified staff best equipped to meet the needs of each player.
- *Resourcing*: We make the best use of our well equipped training facilities.
- *Maximising*: We offer players the best development programme allowing them to achieve their full potential by focusing on their educational, social, psychological and technical development.

[7] http://www.evertonfc.com/academy/youth-academy.html (accessed 16.8.2009)

- *Retaining or releasing*: Each season that players remain with us we keep them progressing. But for those players who are released we will endeavour to find them another club should they so wish.

It is quite obvious that the recruitment of players and their technical development are important for academies. What is worth noting is the fact that academies put great emphasis on the education of their players. Members of academy staff are well aware that there are no guarantees for the young players to make it to the first team and sign professional contracts. Many boys drop out and, therefore, it is very important that they have a sound education which they can build their lives on. The person who is responsible for the educational and social strand is the education and welfare officer.

5.2.2 The education and welfare officer

When the football academies were established in 1997, the FA regulations required them to employ an education and welfare officer in every academy. He is responsible for the pastoral care and mentoring of all academy players. He is central to everything that goes on at the academy because, in one way or another, the players are always affected by developments in their environment. The education and welfare officer, therefore, is in close contact with the coaches, auxiliary staff, parents, tutors, house parents, scouts and the players themselves. In some cases he may also have the job of a coach as well. It is required that an education and welfare officer has a teaching or pedagogical background and good “people-skills”. He also needs to have psychological skills as parents and players often discuss personal issues with him.

The education and welfare officer is in charge of the general academic development of the players. As not all academy players make it to the first team and get a professional contract, he needs to make sure that they get an education that prepares them either for a life within or outside the world of football. He is also responsible and the first point of contact for the foreign academy players. Part of the job of the education and welfare officer is to explain to the foreigners everything they need to know in order to find their way around

their new environment. He is the one doing most of the work off the pitch. Local boys also need his help but foreign boys need support in welfare issues multiplied by three.

He is the one who tries to find host families for the foreign boys. In cases where the boy has great difficulties with English, he tries to find a family where one member speaks the mother tongue of the boy or who is even of the same nationality. Until the foreign boys can express themselves in English, this is a great help for them. The education and welfare officer also works closely with the language tutor. Together they decide what level of English course each foreign player should attend.

5.2.3 The coach

Young players are at academies first and foremost to improve their football skills. The ones who mainly help them in this endeavour are coaches. Coaches give a lot of instructions and it is essential that foreign players understand them. Coaches in collaboration with physiotherapists and medical staff try to tailor the training sessions according to the specific developmental needs of the boys' bodies. During their time at academies, the boys pass through various stages of physical development and the aim is to "build strong bodies that will be resistant to injury and recover quickly following play".[8] Concerning health, adolescents are "bigger, stronger, more energetic, and more coordinated than at any time in their lives" (Feldman 2008:56). This makes Academy training for boys so effective. They are physically able to perform activities from which they can profit their whole football lives. The body tissues are growing, the players become taller, stronger, more flexible, their endurance performance is higher and their motor behaviour is improved. All these factors have implications for the identification of talent in young players. For football coaches in the youth sector, it is extremely important to know "what is going on" with the players.

[8] http://www.fulhamfc.com/Club/Academy/TheAcademy.aspx (accessed 16.8.09)

A very important factor for coaching is the interaction between the chronological age, the maturation age and performance. Biological ages of 14 year old boys might range from 11-19 years. This shows that the maturation process is not the same for every boy, something which has to be taken into account when judging the performance on the pitch. Closely related to the growing body of football players are injuries. Growth epiphysis are still open and it is, therefore, important for the coaches to be aware of this and to tailor the exercises accordingly.

Stratton et al. (2004:155) state that a coach needs to be “a planner, administrator, performer, psychologist, sociologist, physiologist, sports physician, developmentalist and teacher who is able to develop individuals and teams in youth soccer…”. Similarly Jowett (2007:63) writes that a “productive working environment is usually the result of a social environment in which coaches relate, interact and communicate effectively with everyone in the team”. “Everyone” means that also the foreign players are included, with whom not only the coach but all technical, medical and teaching staff need to communicate effectively.

According to the 3+1Cs model of relationships between coaches and athletes, the most important factors of these relationships are closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation (Jowett 2007:70-71). Closeness means that coaches and athletes share a number of emotions while performing their sport. Mutual respect, trust and appreciation are key elements in establishing closeness and a positive sport environment. Good results cannot be achieved without commitment from the athletes as well as the coach. Everyone has his role to play. This is especially important in a team sport such as football. Every action of a coach needs to result in a response from the player. For the whole coaching process to be successful this complementarity is essential. Co-orientation means that coach and player have an empathic understanding. Ideally, they know what the other is feeling and thinking. Communication plays a crucial role in this process as it allows coaches and athletes to understand each other and make this relationship work.

Coaches come from different backgrounds and have different beliefs, expectations and personal qualities. The FA Learning (2004:11) identifies the common knowledge and skills that underpin effective coaching skills as follows:

- Teaching players how and when to use techniques and skills in football.
- Communicating with players, parents, other coaches and agencies.
- Asking appropriate questions, providing explanations, using demonstrations, listening and observing what players do.
- Leading and motivating players.
- Planning and preparing sessions to meet player's needs and ensure safety.
- Delivering and controlling coaching sessions to ensure safe practice.
- Analysing performances and guiding relevant progress.
- Organizational and administrative skills (e.g. booking facilities, arranging transport, completing registration forms).

This is a long and demanding list that sometimes is not easy to fulfil for the coaches. The situation becomes especially difficult when foreign players are involved. It is, for example, very difficult for the coaches to decide why a foreign player is not performing as he should. Is it because he does not understand the instruction or do factors such as fatigue, motivation or anxiety, which also apply to English speaking players, play a significant role?

That there is a lot more involved in coaching than demonstrating shows an extract of the FA's guidelines on how to communicate effectively as a coach (The FA Learning 2004:24). A coach needs to ask questions as well as instruct, find out what motivates players, what they enjoy about football, what they need to improve, what their ambitions are. He needs to have an open ear for players, parents and other coaches alike. On the pitch he should avoid jargon, sarcasm and talking for the sake of it. Furthermore, information and instructions should be kept short and simple. What is especially important with academy boys is to be prepared to share a joke and show you have a sense of humour.

What seems to be undisputed is the fact that it is not enough to just demonstrate when teaching a motor skill. Wulf and Weigelt (1997:362) state that, “teaching motor skills usually involves verbal instructions to the learner about what to do and how to do it” and it is “generally assumed that instructions aid the learning process”. When it comes to demonstrational learning, Bandura’s Cognitive Mediation Theory (1986), is the most prevalent. It states that observational learning consists of the four elements: attention (the learners must pay attention to what he/she wants to learn), retention (symbolic coding or cognitive organisation and rehearsal is necessary), production (the learner must be able to perform the activity and gets feedback) and motivation (various incentives in order to further practice the skill). It follows that observation is good and necessary for learning. The only problem is that learners cannot fully observe their own behaviour. A solution to the problem that coordinated skills in sport cannot be observed by the sportsman is, as Bandura put it (1986:66), to “rely greatly on kinaesthetic feedback and on onlooker’s verbal reports”. Therefore, all football academies nowadays rely heavily on video as a source of feedback. With these new and innovative sources of feedback (e.g. software, video technology) coaches are able to better demonstrate learner’s mistakes and progresses. But it is not enough that the learner just sees what he is doing. The essential thing is the verbal explanation of the coach. If the foreign player does not speak any English he will not understand the feedback and thus will not be able to correct his movements or tactical behaviour on the pitch.

5.2.4 Academic education at football academies

Given the high percentage of boys who do not make it as professional football players, as well as the fact that a football player usually retires around the age of 35, it is essential that the players are prepared for a life outside their chosen profession. The academies try to support their players and provide them with an academic education. At football academies the main aim is to become a better football player and according to Stratton et al. (2004:208), academies all follow a similar structure in achieving this aim. The Academy package encompasses

various components: Tactical component, technical component, diet and nutrition, psychological (emotional awareness) component: e.g. lifestyle management, physical component, competence skills (e. g. dealing with the public, social skills, driving skills, drug awareness, financial planning). In addition to these football related themes and topics, at football academies the boys do an Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (ASE) program. This program supports the football element of the two-year scholarship. Through work-based learning and theory sessions the boys receive a balanced and challenging education. ASE consists of the three elements: football (12 hours per week), education (10 hours per week) and work-based learning. Within this educational framework they follow a Business And Technology Education Council (BTEC) in Sport Studies. The vocational qualification thereby is equivalent to two A-levels. The work-based element comprises expert speakers, coaches, referees, other professionals, first team players, Club Manager and senior staff who share their experiences of working and playing for a professional football club. At Liverpool Academy, for example, qualifications are tailored to each player's needs and abilities. The programs for the older boys (16-18 years) encompass A-levels, BTEC programs, National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses, General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSE's), EFL programs and key skill projects. Similarly, at Sunderland the boys embark on an Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence with combined training and playing experiences. The ASE framework is equivalent to two A-Levels. Additionally, the scholars follow an academic program that can lead to two additional A-levels. When they leave the academy they also have a referee's qualification and an FA Level 1 coaching badge.

Green (2009) is very critical when it comes to the academic education of boys playing in football academies. He quotes coaches, teachers and academy staff and former academy players who agree that the young boys are too tired to do their school work because they spend so much time with football. But "with children playing in football academies and falling behind with their education, the

danger is that they get left behind for life." So "having education to fall back on isn't an option – it is a necessity" (2009:132).

6 Research at football clubs and academies

It is very difficult to conduct studies in football clubs and academies. The Premier League Clubs are organisations where a lot of money is at stake and they are very cautious of letting outsiders in. I was very lucky to get at least a glimpse of the situation but due to reasons of confidentiality it is not possible for me to name the academies I visited. What complicates matters is the fact that it was not possible for me to do any follow up after my visits and obtain additional information. I contacted a few education and welfare officers and language tutors but I never received an answer to my e-mails. This makes it extremely difficult to conduct a thorough research.

The set of data to be analysed is somewhat different for every academy. This is because the parameters concerning the possibilities for my research varied very much in each academy. Overall, the needs analysis at academy level consisted of semi-structured interviews, interviews with open-ended questions, extensive open personal discussions, telephone interviews and questionnaires. The whole study is qualitative in its nature and covers six football clubs and academies. I visited three academies personally, met with the language tutor of one academy and obtained data from two others through questionnaires.

I spent three days at Academy A, where I was shown around the whole premises, observed training sessions and language courses, talked to players, the language tutor, coaches and the physiotherapist. The education and welfare officer made sure that I received answers to all my questions. I had many informal talks and discussions which were immensely helpful and gave me an excellent insight into the academy system and all its positive and negative sides. Through interviews with the physiotherapist I obtained insight into the linguistic challenges between foreign players and medical staff. Football players can injure themselves and then it is important that foreign players are able to tell the people who treat them what is wrong with them. I got to know not only the academy but also parts of the whole club's life while interviewing also senior players in their

training complex. My hotel was located overlooking all the training grounds of the senior players so that I could also observe parts of their training sessions.

I spent a very busy day at academy B. The education and welfare officer picked me up at my hotel and drove me to the very impressive, brand-new academy complex. He was very busy, but nevertheless, tried to help me as best as he could. I got the chance to interview him, the physiotherapist, two Italian, one German, one Swedish and one Czech academy player. Furthermore, I had a very long telephone interview with the language tutor of the academy. On my way back I could also interview one of the coaches who drove me back to my hotel. During my stay at academy C, which lasted a few hours, I could interview a German and a Finnish player and observe a language lesson. Additionally, I had a two-hour interview with the education and welfare officer together with the language tutor. This kind of information gathering was highly interesting and informative for me. My interview questions inspired the two men to reflect upon their academy system, to identify problems and to find possible solutions for the future. Through their reports and reflexions I received a brilliant insight into the academy's system as well as their challenges with the foreign boys. I gathered data about academy D through a lengthy personal interview with the language tutor who teaches senior as well as academy players. Naturally, he was not allowed to provide details but he gave me a good overview of the challenges a language tutor faces at football clubs and academies. He also showed me examples of his teaching materials. The data of academy E and F were gathered through a telephone interview with one of the language tutors and through questionnaires. I did not visit these academies but the language tutors as well as foreign players were willing to fill in my questionnaires.

This highly diversified data gathering process permits a very good and multi-angled insight into the situation of foreign players in Premier League football academies. Due to this diversification of sources, the results show different emphasis for each academy. Long (2005:28) states that it is important to use triangulation when analysing data. This means that to increase the credibility of

the interpretation of the data, one needs to compare two or more different sources, methods, investigators or theories, and sometimes a combination thereof. For this dissertation, I attempted to interview and talk to as many different actors within football academies as possible.

Even though my investigation focuses mainly on academy players (15/16-18 years), I also interviewed senior players. It was important for me to see whether there are differences in the learning behaviour between older and younger players and whether language learning is influenced by different factors at different ages of a foreign football player. Furthermore, I was of the opinion that older players are a good source (as they are experts and have the experience) to analyse what younger players need to learn when they “grow up” in the club. I also wanted to see whether there are differences in the language learning behaviour and willingness between senior and academy players. I was able to gain data from eight senior football players. This data gathering consisted of personal interviews with three senior players who were still active in the Premier League at the time of the interview. With two players who had already ended their careers, I had telephone interviews and they also sent me back a questionnaire. Two players who played in Scotland filled in my questionnaire. The press officer of his new club interviewed one player on my behalf who had just finished his contract with a Premier League club. The questions of the interview were based on my questionnaire. I took notes and recorded all interviews on tape. At a later stage, I transcribed the interviews and talks. The key people in my investigation were language tutors at football academies. Even though they are experts in their field, they do not have the necessary insider knowledge of the working environment of the academy players. They are in most cases only in contact with the education and welfare officer and plan their courses around his input. They are never present on the pitch and therefore need to rely on the input of academy staff and players themselves when it comes to identifying the linguistic needs of the foreign players. Therefore, I also interviewed education and welfare officers, coaches, physiotherapists and football players.

Summing up my needs analysis of English for foreign football players consisted of:

- Interviews with eight senior players who were or are still active
- Semi-structured interviews and discussions with three education and welfare officers of three different football academies in England
- Personal interviews, telephone interviews and questionnaires with six language tutors from six different English football academies
- Structured and semi-structured interviews, talks and questionnaires with sixteen academy football players from five different academies who are required to take the language course
- Semi-structured Interviews and discussions with three coaches from two different academies
- Semi-structured interviews with two physiotherapists of two different academies
- Observation of two language courses at two different academies
- Observation of one team-training session and one goalkeeper-training session at one academy
- Observation of three academy matches

6.1 Relevant questions

This thesis attempts to provide a first basis for a comprehensive teaching and learning resource for academy football players. Apart from general questions about the players and the academies, the following questions were of relevance for the study:

Language problems:

- Do foreign players encounter language problems or is the language of football really universal?
- How do clubs deal with and support foreign football players who do not speak English? What specific language needs do foreign football players have? Where do linguistic problems occur in their daily lives and how can

they be solved? Are clubs interested in the language skills of the players before they sign them? How do coaches and physiotherapists deal with the language barrier?

English courses for football players:

- Do English Premier League clubs and academies offer English courses for their players? If so, are the courses organised like General English courses or ESP courses? Who decides on the content of the courses? Which teaching materials should be used? How should courses and learners be evaluated? How motivated and willing are foreign football players to learn English?
- Do the players need football terms or General English or a combination of both or in other words, is there a need for “Football English” or is it enough to teach General English with a few references to football terms? Are football players different language learners than General English learners? If so, how do language tutors organise their courses in order to meet the needs of the players?
- Do language tutors in football academies apply special teaching methods? How do they include findings of language learning theories into their courses? Do language tutors need to be football experts?

Social aspects of football players in England:

- What are the special living and working conditions and environments for foreign senior and academy players in the Premier League? Is there a difference between foreign senior and academy players when it comes to language learning and language courses? How do football players cope with the new culture they are living in? Do language tutors try to teach elements of English culture in their courses?
- What role does the education and welfare officer play in the young players’ lives?

Football players as English learners:

- Are there differences in language needs according to particular positions on the pitch? Do good English skills also improve the performance of a football player on the pitch? Are there – especially at the beginning – differences in the language requirements for different positions on the pitch? Do good English skills also improve the performance of a football player on the pitch?
- Is there a difference between foreign senior and academy players when it comes to language learning and language courses?

Furthermore, in analogy to Singh (1983:155), the following additional questions have to be asked in order to be able to define the linguistic needs of a football ESP class:

- What do footballers need to talk?
- What is their educational background?
- What is their history of learning?
- What are their aspirations?
- What place does English occupy in their long-term plans?

6.2 Foreign senior players

There are hundreds of foreign senior players in the English Premier League who come from all around the world and have different football, social, religious and educational backgrounds. In many cases it is a challenge for the clubs who sign them to integrate them into the whole team structure. Speaking English is one of the key integrating factors. The first group of interest for my study are foreign senior players who play or used to play in England and Scotland. It was extremely difficult to find players who were willing to give interviews. Many foreign players in the Premier League are big stars. Apart from their football job, they usually have many commitments outside the pitch. They get so many interview requests that they need to be selective. This is why it is hardly possible as a private person to get in contact with them. I even tried to contact players' agents and sport reporters but they, too, are far too busy to fulfil every interview

request. Therefore, I had to look for alternative solutions. As I am Austrian, I tried to find Austrian players who played in the United Kingdom. In order to get first results concerning language problems in football teams, I tried not to limit myself to the Premier League. This brought me the first successes. Thanks to the help of one particular former player, I found five Austrian players who were all playing for clubs in England and Scotland. I managed to get in contact with them and do telephone interviews and, additionally, they filled in my questionnaire.

During my visit to one of the academies, the education and welfare officer helped me to get in touch with foreign players of the club's first team. I could undertake extensive personal interviews with two Swiss and one Georgian player who all played in the English Premier League at the time of the interview. Except for the goalkeeper, roughly every position on the football field was represented in all the interviews and talks with foreign senior players. One player even reported that he played on every position except in the goal. Furthermore, I obtained general information concerning senior players' language abilities and needs from three language tutors who worked for football academies and also taught the senior players of their clubs. Due to the fact that it was so difficult to find current senior players who were willing to give interviews or fill in questionnaires, the picture of foreign senior players given here might be a little biased. Some of them were still active at the time of the research, but others had already finished their careers. Nowadays, nearly every club that employs foreign players offers English courses. From talks with language tutors, I know that the mentality of most of the senior players has not changed at all. They still are very lax when it comes to taking and following a language course.

6.2.1 Foreign players and the universal language of football

As soon as transfer windows are open, twice a year, clubs spend millions for new players for their clubs. First and foremost, clubs are interested in the football skills of their new employees. But as many of these new players come from a foreign country, they mostly do not have a sufficient command of English.

Only one of the eight senior players said that his English was very good when he came to Great Britain. This is not surprising because he had passed his A-level exams (with compulsory English). Two players stated that their English was ok. They had learnt it at school but both had problems understanding the regional dialect. Three players said that they had knowledge of English they had learnt at school. Two of them could communicate on a low level but the third stated that he was “far away from being able to communicate properly”. Two players did not possess English language skills except single words like “good morning” or “hello”.

There are a few exceptions but it is striking to notice that most foreign players need quite a long adaptation phase in the Premier League. This is due not only to the fast pace of English football but in many cases also to the language barrier. All players I interviewed agreed that, especially at the beginning, they had to struggle with the speed of English as well as with the Irish and Scottish dialect of fellow players. In most cases native players do not adapt their speech to the linguistic requirements of their foreign co-players. All foreigners told me that the English players spoke too fast for them to understand.

During training sessions, foreign players who have no or only little command of English can use signs, gestures and can watch the other players performing certain tasks. What is very problematic for them, especially at the beginning, is using the phone. Many clubs have player liaison officers who organise, for example, the entire relocation but in some clubs players need to do some of these things alone. This means that they also have to call people to fix appointments or simply ask for information. All players told me that such telephone conversations were very difficult for them because they could not rely on signs and gestures any more.

Many senior players do not come alone. They bring their wives or girlfriends and children with them. With a child who goes to school it is especially important to speak the language. The parents must be able to look for a suitable school and to talk to the teachers and fellow parents. Furthermore, these players have to

expand their linguistic knowledge into areas encompassing housing, dealing with an estate agent and car salesman, getting an Internet connection, getting a TV subscription, making travel arrangements, getting a bank account, etc. Of the senior players I interviewed, three came to England with their girlfriends. All three women spoke English and did not feel the need to attend a course. They were the ones who dealt with the apartment, shopping, school, etc. and therefore, needed different English skills than their partners. However, the players stated that they tried to help out with these matters as well.

The central question when it comes to coaching foreign players is, to what extent they need to understand the language. The senior players I interviewed were all of the opinion that English is not so important because they all speak the universal language of football. But when probing a bit deeper, all foreign players (senior and academy level) in my interviews were a bit ambiguous when it came to training sessions and language skills, especially when asked about how information concerning the skill to be performed was conveyed and if there were any problems. On the one hand they all told me that they had no problems because they knew how to play football and just had to watch what the other players were doing. On the other hand they admitted that especially at the beginning it was quite hard to follow the training sessions as they did not speak English well enough. Two players explicitly stated that they were not allowed to use their mother tongue when they were with the team. The coach just did not like it. One player said that for three months, with the exception of telephone conversations, he was forbidden to use his mother tongue. So he was forced to learn English and use it as quickly as possible. The other player said that the manager did not like it when the players used their mother tongue. They had to learn English first and when they were able to speak English, they were also allowed to speak their mother tongue again.

6.2.2 Importance of language knowledge for the clubs

I wanted to know whether the English skills of a player mattered for a club before a senior player is taken under contract. To my surprise it did not and still does not

matter at all. Only one of the eight players was asked about his English skills. Nobody was interested in the other seven players' abilities in English. Football is the only skill in the foreground when signing players. Some clubs just assumed that the English of their new player was not good and organised English courses. However, even though the one who answered that his coach was interested in his English skills noted that for the football contract it was of no relevance at all. In the phase of negotiations of the contract and trial training sessions, only one of the eight players was assisted by an interpreter.

One of the language tutors who works at a football academy and also teaches senior players told me that at their club there is nearly always an interpreter at the beginning to manage the contractual details, as well as being present at press conferences. However, clubs usually do not use professional interpreters when dealing with foreign players. Half the players stated that they did not have any interpreters at all. In some cases, this was their own agent during contract negotiations and in others the language tutor or fellow players acted as interpreters. This is the most frequent way of dealing with language problems in senior teams, as there often is a player who speaks the mother tongue of the newly signed colleague who has no command of the language.

6.2.3 English course

Six of the eight clubs offered English courses but only three players of these clubs attended them for the duration between two months and one year. Two players did not want to attend a course even though their level of English was deficient. Two clubs did not offer an English course for their players. However, it needs to be mentioned that the two players used to play for the club at a previous time. Nowadays it is quite usual that clubs offer courses for their foreign players. Whether the foreign senior players take the opportunity is a different matter. The duration of the English course attended by the three players varied quite significantly between two months and half a year. No language tutor was a football expert nor did any tutor accompany the players to the field to do

translations. The language tutors did not help the players prepare for press conferences or other public appearances.

The player who attended an English course for half a year, spent four hours a week with his English tutor and additionally read newspapers every day in order to improve his English. The number of English lessons was defined by the player himself, who also told the tutor what he wanted to learn. The actual topics were then chosen by the teacher. The player took the course very seriously and always tried to do his homework. It was an individual 1:1 course in which the player could define his pace of learning. For him the combination between course and individual learning through interaction with fellow players was very important. The second player took an English course for about two months even though he did not speak English at all (except “good morning” and “hello”). He learnt more from his teammates than from his English course. His main goal was to be able to talk to the press and to give interviews. The youngest of the three players took an English course for a whole year. He had the advantage of basic English knowledge when he came to play for his club. He took English lessons three to four times a week but was not motivated to additionally improve his English during his free time. From his school time, he already knew a lot of grammar but had to improve his vocabulary. The number of English lessons per week was decided by the club and the player had no influence on this decision. The content of the course was up to the tutor and the players had little to no influence at all. Initially, he took the course quite seriously but his motivation declined as his English improved. He did his homework, usually, not at home but in the bus which took him from his apartment to the training ground. There were no marks and no grading system. There were exams but they were not really strictly graded. What all eight respondents had in common was that they were not embarrassed when they made mistakes. Two of the players who attended a course also learnt some dialect (single words) and the culture of the country. One player stated that he just learnt General English in the course and had to pick up the dialect while talking to his fellow players.

Due to lack of time, it is sometimes very difficult for the language tutors to teach foreign senior players. Many of these players also play in their respective national teams so they are away for quite some time. Travelling and being away for international competitions makes it difficult to keep up a regular teaching routine. As these players usually do not learn a lot in private, the tutor has to start all over again when they meet for the next session after a break of a few weeks. Therefore, progress is understandably very slow. It was interesting to discover how much time senior players spend on training or in the club during the season. This in contrast sheds light on the time senior players could theoretically spend on English courses. Only one of the respondents stated that he finished at around five o'clock in the afternoon as he has training sessions twice a day. All the other players reported that they had training sessions only in the mornings. Two of them stated that they had breakfast with the team. After training they had lunch at the club restaurant and then they were free to do what they chose. Three of these senior players were among those who were offered an English course by the club but did not attend it and the other two attended the course for two years or only half a year.

My findings in England were similar to the Dutch study of Kellerman et al. (2005:205). I also found that the clubs try to offer at least two lessons of English per week but "following language courses is low on their (the players') priority list". Six of the eight players stated that they tried to improve their English in one way or the other. One player did not answer the question and one player clearly stated that he was not interested in learning English during his free time. His mother tongue was French and he spoke French at home, watched French television and never read any English newspapers. He said, "I never really get involved in the conversation with the English players because there are French players at the club. We stay together and speak French". The majority, however, stated that they tried to improve their English language skills themselves. They went to the cinema, watched English TV and read English newspapers. Furthermore, they bought DVDs which they watched with subtitles in their mother tongue. One player said that he listened to certain passages two or three times

when he did not understand them the first time. In that way he managed to learn new words and phrases. The Internet is also a very important tool for learning English.

6.3 Academy A

The first club I visited was a few kilometres out of the main city where the stadium of the football club is located. At the time of my arrival there was an under 18s match going on. I stepped on the premises with the aim of finding my contact person at the club but I was immediately stopped – albeit very politely – by a tall man standing next to the pitch. It became soon clear to me that it is not allowed for outsiders to just go over to the pitch and watch the boys play. It was also not permitted to take any photographs of the premises. Even though the man who stopped me was very nice and soon had a joke on his lips, I had received a clear first impression of the way academies work. As there is so much money involved even with the young boys, academies need to be very careful and are very secretive. Once I had explained who I was, I was taken to my contact who was the education and welfare officer of the academy. He and all his colleagues were very friendly and even though they were busy, they tried to help me and answered all my questions. This first academy had the atmosphere of a big family where the boys seemed to feel at home.

What was very interesting for me to see was that even Premier League academies are faced with the same problems as the smaller rural clubs all around the world. The most important team is the senior team. These players get all the money and attention possible. The same seems to be true for academy A. With money from the deceased sponsor of Club A, an ultra-modern training centre for academy players was built. The young players, however, could not enjoy it for long as the manager of the first team decided that it was not acceptable for his senior players to train in and around an old building. So the academy had to leave its modern building to the senior players who only spent about half as much time as the younger ones there.

The following descriptions and reports are based on personal interviews with the education and welfare officer, the physiotherapist, one of the coaches, the language tutor and two foreign players. Furthermore, I had the chance to intensively discuss the situation at the academy with the education and welfare officer, to observe training sessions with the team and one of the goalkeepers and be present at one language lesson.

6.3.1 Foreign players

The education and welfare officer of Academy A told me that the integration into the team without good English skills is a problem. For example, the club had a problem with a goalkeeper and also with an African boy whose mother tongue is French and who is very slow learning English. He has a totally different educational background to the other boys. He is very quiet on the pitch, which makes it difficult for his fellow players to play with him and also integrate him into the team. The local boys do not like it when the foreigners form groups and just sit at a table on their own during lunch and exclusively speak their native language. The local boys tend to resent them. The fact that they do not want to mix and learn English just makes the job harder on the field for everyone.

The foreign boys live in a lodge with the rest of the boys and pick up English quite quickly. The ones who mix only with the groups from their own country or who have their parents over learn much slower. In the lodge a “lodge-couple” is responsible for them and helps them whenever they encounter a problem. When the foreign boys start their contract with the academy, they already know their “surrogate parents”. Normally, the boys come to the academy during their school holidays to participate in training sessions. On these occasions they and their parents meet the lodge parents.

At the beginning, most of the foreign players do not speak English very well. They need to rely on signs but for their own survival pick up the most important things quite quickly. What they also pick up very quickly is “bad” language. The foreign boys may not always know what they are saying but they know many swear words from a very early stage. The local boys try to help them and speak

slower or repeat certain things they have not understood. One foreign player told me that after eight months in England he does not have problems understanding his fellow players any more – except for one player who comes from Scotland and speaks with a heavy Scottish accent. According to the language tutor, certain nationalities speak better English when they come to the academy than others. The Germans and many of the French are usually quite good as they have learnt English in school and can at least express themselves at a basic level.

It can occur that a foreign player is not comfortable living and playing in England and wants to return home. Normally, this is problematic due to contractual reasons but the club feels that it is in the best interest of everybody to waive the contract in such situations. They always try to come to an agreement with the boy's parents or agent (most boys at the age of 13 or 14 already have agents) because if he is not feeling well he will not perform on the pitch and therefore is no use to the team. Living and playing football in an academy can also be overwhelming for the foreign boys. One of them told me that it is very good that in the courses they do not only talk about football because he is surrounded by football 24 hours a day, so a bit of a change is very welcome.

6.3.2 Language problems

Language problems occur on and off the pitch. The biggest problems linguistically, however, occur off the pitch. When the foreign players are playing football with their fellow colleagues they can communicate through universal sign language or through visual things like the tactics board. Even though they cannot communicate everything they want they can make themselves understood to a certain extent. The foreign boys usually join the club during pre-season training, and therefore, they have some time to get adjusted to the football played at the academy before competitive matches start. The real problems lie off the pitch when they want to communicate with the other boys. It is very difficult for them to join a conversation or to make jokes with the other boys. If foreign boys do not speak English, it is very hard for the physiotherapist and the whole medical staff.

Most of the time they have to rely on trial and error which is not a very satisfactory method, as one physiotherapist describes.

> *"I suppose it's just a case of trial and error. We play around with it and ask, does this hurt or does that hurt. We also use body language and non-verbal communication and eventually we tend together, but it can be difficult."*

If a boy really has a serious injury, the medical staff uses interpreters. The education and welfare officer speaks French, the doctor speaks French and a little German and the physiotherapist gets by in Italian. In general, the local boys try to help the foreigners to learn English but the native boys are not instructed to behave in a certain way in order to help the foreigners.

Normally, the boys are not frightened of making mistakes but for them it sometimes is a problem admitting that they do not understand. Some things the coaches or other staff members say just go unnoticed. This can have serious effects on the judgement of the coaches. They sometimes think that the boys are just not good enough on the pitch but actually the problem is not poor football but poor language skills. Therefore, it is also important to teach them certain vocabulary and phrases in connection with football.

The academy staff try to help the foreign boys as best as they can with their language barrier. They get help when they get their driving licence or want to open a bank account. Furthermore, the academy tries to take over some of the responsibilities of the boy's parents. There are, for instance, restrictions what car an academy player is allowed to buy in order for them to be as safe as possible.

6.3.3 Language course

English courses are compulsory for all foreign players. The club insists that the players attend a course and it is even a condition of signing the contract. Should the players not attend at all or not behave in the course as well as in the academy, they could have their contract terminated. In case a boy plays truant or does not behave in the course, he could be excluded from the squad for the next match. In Academy A, there is a close relation between learning English and

playing football. Even though there is normally no contractual requirement to learn English, it may be included in a contract in certain cases.

During an average week the boys have two two-hour language sessions with a language tutor. The rest of the learning is done through interaction with the foreign players. As there are not too many foreign players, they just have one multi-level course. Overall, the boys are very willing to learn English. As in any course, the boys also get homework which they usually do. The language tutor needs to be somewhat lenient in certain situations because it can happen that the boys are away with their national teams and simply have no time for their homework. The teaching takes place in small groups but occasionally there are also private lessons. The language tutor designs the course and determines the overall curriculum as well as which course books to use. At Academy A the language tutor uses a well known General English course book. In addition, she uses games and quizzes around football-related topics. There is no form of assessment in the traditional sense, such as exams or tests. Rather, the tutor revises grammatical items or vocabulary during the lessons. That way she also sees whether the boys need to repeat things or whether they have mastered certain linguistic areas.

Normally, the boys have their English courses together but the academy tries to fulfil the personal and educational needs of every individual player. There was an instance where the foreign boys where too shy and did not want to attend lessons with their colleagues. One boy in particular, who knew that he had a different background to the other boys, received private tuition. Most of the foreign players who come to England initially speak very little English. Many boys of African origin are also barely literate which means that the language tutor not only needs to teach English but also basic writing and reading skills. In such cases the boys take separate classes. What makes teaching especially difficult is the fact that the school experience of the foreign boys varies immensely.

At the academy there is no official curriculum for the language courses. The language tutor decides what is to be taught. At the beginning of a course they

usually start out with the technical vocabulary that the boys may need on the pitch or in the stadium. The tutor also teaches a lot of nutrition-related topics. She has the nutrition plan that the boys are required to follow and thus can help the foreign boys with difficult expressions. She also works together with the physiotherapist who sends her emails requesting that the boys learn certain words. But the language tutor does not really work together very closely with the coaches and other staff. It mostly is only “work on demand”. On most Mondays, she brings in a review of the first team’s match of the local or national press. Even though these articles are very difficult to understand, even for the advanced learners, they have a look at them. The boys like to look at the player’s ratings and discuss them in class.

The most important skills for the foreign players are listening and speaking but all four skills are taught in the English course. Exercises and teaching aids used to teach these skills are: listening and reading comprehensions, dialogues, cloze exercises, quizzes and games, pictures and oral translations in order to check comprehension. Traditional exercises, such as essay writing or word lists, are not used. Grammar is taught but only in a very basic form. Sometimes IT is used but other media, for example MP3 or DVDs are not used in the course. As the boys are sportsmen and very competitive they especially like to play language games (even very basic ones like “hang man). The language tutor also brings the tape recorder in and they listen to different accents.

She also tries to include English culture in her lessons. Since she uses commercial course books, she teaches the culture that is included in them. Furthermore, she also goes to the pub with the foreign academy boys in order to experience English culture first hand. They even have lessons in the pub. As the boys should learn Standard English, she also corrects dialect or slang words which they pick up very quickly. They especially pick up all the swear words without really knowing what they are saying, so in the course they talk about it. Once a year the foreign boys are invited to the home of their language tutor where they get the chance to meet some of her friends. As the boys live together

in a lodge (where they are supported by “host parents”), they normally do not get a chance to see much of traditional English family life. In that way they can experience English culture first hand. Usually the boys are not embarrassed when they make a mistake. The tutor tries to establish a very supportive teaching and learning environment.

6.3.4 The language tutor

The language tutor became employed by the academy because her school had links with the clubs. One day the academy phoned the school and asked for help with the first French student. She has been a language tutor since March 2002 and is a very experienced teacher who has taught in France and Japan. Outside the academy she currently teaches French and Spanish for 11-16 year olds. The language tutor is not a football expert but she is an educated fan (who is a season ticket holder) and knows football vocabulary and the rules. Currently, she is the only language tutor working for the academy. In their first week the language tutor, in cooperation with the education and welfare officer, explains the code of conduct, rules and regulations to the foreign players. The tutor makes sure that the players understand what kind of behaviour is expected of them. In order to do so, the language tutor needs to have knowledge of the mother tongue of the players.

At the time of my visit the required languages were French and German and the language tutor was fluent in French and could communicate in German. The club also works with other “outsiders” of the club when it comes to dealing with foreign boys. Academy A, for example, works with a retired teacher who is fluent in German. They used to have a Hungarian goalkeeper and found two women who spoke Hungarian. They would come to the academy and help out with the language which normally works very well. But there are also occasions where such a system fails to work out. Some time ago, they had a boy from Finland who spoke English but not well enough to feel comfortable talking with his fellow players. The academy could not find anyone who spoke Finnish and who could

communicate with the boy in his own language. He soon got homesick and eventually left the club after only a couple of months.

The language tutor is not present at training sessions or at talks between the coaches and the boys. But as she goes to all first team home games she often discusses games and performances of players with the academy boys. The boys usually do not have press conferences but if they did have appearances in the media the language tutor would help them. If they are taking their driving licence exam she helps them with the highway code and the written exam. The language tutor is very happy about her job at the academy (even though she does not earn very much money). She enjoys it and often tells people, “I get paid for talking about football”.

6.3.5 Coaching

The coaches are strict but I had the impression that they really cared about the boys. They usually have a dual role: during training sessions they are the strict coaches but afterwards they also act like surrogate parents for the boys, which is especially important for the foreign players who often spend weeks always from their families. They always have an open ear for the boys’ problems and try to help whenever they can. In return, they expect respectful behaviour towards themselves. The ability to speak a foreign language is not a prerequisite for employment at the academy and at academy A no coach can speak a foreign language. In order to explain tactical things to the foreign players, coaches mainly use tactics boards – metal boards with little magnetic counters where it is possible to show where the players should go. It is also possible to use “shadow play” in which there is no opposition. On the training ground the players just imagine that there is an opposition and start playing from the back and move along the field together as a unit depending on the system they are playing.

Coaching is not always easy when foreign players do not sufficiently understand or speak the language. Foreign goalkeepers who have to communicate a lot with their defenders and have insufficient command of English can encounter serious problems. Therefore, Academy A does a lot of language training with their foreign

goalkeeper during training sessions. They line up a wall and give the boy the most important terminology to use in this situation. The first few times, the boy(s) forget them or do not get them right because it all has to be done without thinking. Sometimes the foreign boy just cannot get the words out quickly enough. In these instances, the coaches take over the role of the language tutor. To ensure progress, the academy gives a bi-monthly report on the football skills and personal effectiveness of each individual player. This report encompasses details of the player's attendance at the academy, games played, injuries, a skills report, general comments and action to be taken.

In general the coaches use a tactics board and walk the player through a particular situation directly on the pitch. But they also rely very much on foreign players who can act as interpreters. The coaches also record particular exercises and show the boys the videos after the training session. Overall, visual aids are indispensable when working with foreign boys. Usually the boys grasp the exercises quite quickly. In cases in which the foreign boys have absolutely no clue what is going on, the coaches work together with the language tutor. The tutor then works out certain phrases and covers various topics to help them with their understanding.

The coach I interviewed clearly told me that there are differences in the need for language depending on the position on the pitch. To the question, "What are the most important words or phrases on the pitch?" the coach I interviewed answered, "These words or phrases would be position specific." And even though the coaches try to help the foreign boys wherever they can, the foreign boys stated that whenever the coaches address the whole team they do not speak slower or repeat things that the foreign boys might not have understood. The situation is totally different when they deal with the foreign boys alone.

6.4 Academy B

Academy B was in stark contrast to the first one. It was brand new and for me as a visitor, it felt a bit like a secret agency. The education and welfare officer who

was my contact person came to pick me up at my hotel. With him I entered the premises but did not get very far. Immediately after the entrance I was asked to sign into a visitor's book. I had to give my name and the time of my arrival. It was strictly forbidden to take any pictures. Furthermore, I had to hand in the interview questions I wanted to ask the players and coaches. My passport and student ID was photocopied and transferred to the press department. This should ensure that I really was the PhD student I said I was and not a spying reporter or member of a rival club.

Even though the education and welfare officer was under a great deal of stress, he made sure that I could interview as many boys and staff as possible. The atmosphere in the academy was not as warm as in Academy A. Everything seemed more structured and less like a big family. I could interview academy players, the education and welfare officer, a physiotherapist and a coach. I was allowed to do an extensive interview with the language tutor who was not present at the time of my visit but who was willing to answer all my questions via telephone.

6.4.1 Foreign players

Club B is a big Premier League club. Out of a group of 34 boys in the academy, 14 are foreigners. Their countries of origin are Italy, Germany, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, France and Brazil. All foreign players I interviewed came to England at or around the age of 16. The club helps them a lot because there are so many different things they need to organise and learn. When they come to the academy accommodation with a family is organised. They need a bank account, basic travel information and how to find their way around their new environment. Naturally, there are different levels of English when the boys arrive. Many of them have problems speaking and understanding English when they arrive. But of course there are also boys whose English is either at an intermediate or even an advanced level. Scandinavian boys in particular start at a much higher level than the rest of the foreign boys.

Upon arrival, the foreign players all receive a welcome pack with the most important information concerning how to behave, who is responsible for what at the academy, etc. This welcome pack is written in the mother tongue of the respective player. Even if the foreign boys come on trial or before they sign as a foreign player, the academy would find an English tutor in the home country of the player who works with the boys in advance of coming to England. This is quite a bit of organisation but the club is satisfied if the player knows very basic words such as “good morning” or “how are you”. They feel this gives the boys a good start and a bit of a feel for the language and the country they will be living and working in. The education and welfare officer was quite impressed by how quickly the foreign players learn to make themselves understood and to communicate with their colleagues.

> *“I am completely and utterly gobsmacked by their learning in such a short period of time. Imagine, the boys you met this morning, some of them have been in this country only around six, seven or eight months.”*

Most of them get homesick because they are quite young and have never lived abroad for such a long time. The good thing is that they all play for their national teams, so they frequently see their teammates from their home country or they even have the chance to travel home. Apart from that, the club sends the foreign boys home every six weeks. If they play on a Saturday, they go home right after the match, spend Sunday and Monday at home and return on a Tuesday. Depending on the contract, the academy organises the opportunity for parents and friends of the boy to visit about six or seven times a year. The club provides accommodation for them. Family and friends come on a Friday, watch the game on a Saturday and spend Saturday and Sunday with their son/friend. When it comes to living with host families and homesickness, one other factor has to be taken into account. Depending on where the foreign boys come from, they are quite happy in England even though they are here without their families because, for some boys, the standard of housing and living is better than in their home countries.

All members of staff try to help and spend some extra time with the foreign boys who are in general higly motivated to improve their English themselves. For them, the Scottish accent of their education and welfare officer was, and still is, very difficult to understand. At the beginning most foreign players also had problems with the Welsh accent of one of the coaches. They did not really understand him but after a few months got used to it. At the beginning, the foreign boys all have problems understanding the coaches and the commands they give on the pitch. But as they spend every day on the pitch with their coaches, they learn the most important phrases within about three months. Apart from that, quite a few coaches and other staff at the academy are bilingual. The training sessions are very demonstrative. Whenever complex to explain tactical or technical skills are being trained they team players up so that an English boy trains with a foreign boy. During training sessions, the coaches also use visual aids. As they coach a relatively large group of foreigners, they try to speak slower or repeat certain things. Foreign boys who have great problems understanding the exercises are taken aside by the coach who then explains everything again in even simpler words or with the help of visual aids. In some instances, the coaches also literally walk through particular game situations with the players. They would show them directly on the pitch what to do and explain the situation to them. In addition to the coaches' support, most of the local boys try to help the foreigners when they do not understand commands during training sessions. As long as the coaches use the same exercises over and over again they do not have problems but when exercises change, the local boys have to help their foreign teammates. The language tutor is never present at training sessions. In Club B the coaches often take over the role of the language tutors when they are on the pitch with the foreign boys.

6.4.2 Language problems

There are always minor language problems which can cause great distress for the boys.

“Last year we had a problem with an Italian boy who didn’t like onions and he didn’t’ know how to say it in English.”

For the boys it is a huge change to live with “new” parents. There is so much change for them and they have to learn expressions in English from so many different spectra of life.

Upon arrival, whenever possible, bilingual academy staff work with the boys. They explain the most important things to them and help them out when they encounter language problems. In extreme cases the academy will have an interpreter working with the boys on arrival but usually the academy does not need the help of interpreters.

In order to integrate, it is very important for the foreign boys to understand the banter and the humour of the local players. Boys their age like to mock each other and usually this is a kind of language which is not learnt in the language course. The foreign boys seem to pick up this language quite quickly without really knowing what they are saying. On the other hand, they are the ones who are frequently mocked without understanding what is being said.

Usually the boys have to undergo a medical examination when they join the academy. As their English is usually not very good, they come with someone who can translate. This could be a member of staff, a fellow player, the agent or the player’s scout. This means that the response is slower than in direct communication with the boy. Occasionally, things might be misunderstood and sometimes, especially when the boys are injured on the pitch, players who speak better English translate. When it comes to injuries on the pitch, the physiotherapist is often reduced to trial and error. Through his assessment, he can screen what is painful and what is not. The difficulty lies in how certain players from different backgrounds communicate their pain. Some players scream and shout but if you want to take them off the field they refuse. Other players are quiet and do not say much until the physiotherapist finds out that they are injured. This behaviour is rooted in cultural differences. Obviously, it is not difficult for the medical staff to uncover major injuries without too much

communication. It is the little things that are difficult to grasp when the players do not speak English. For the physiotherapist, it is interesting (and necessary) to know the small details of the history of injuries or how an injury occurred and was treated. The language tutors are not the ones who can help much as they often have different working hours to the medical staff. The physiotherapist explained:

> *"The language tutors are mostly not at the academy when we treat the boys. So we haven't worked together with them but it is something that would be useful in case we struggle or if we don't have a player that speaks the language. We always need to find somebody who communicates for us."*

At the moment, the academy does not have a kind of dictionary or translations of the most common injuries. They often try words that mean the same in Latin as in the language of the foreign boys. Overall, the treatment or the diagnosis often takes longer with foreign boys as the medical staff always have to find an interpreter first. This is something that can worry the injured foreign player, who does not really understand what is going on or how serious his injury is. It is difficult for the physiotherapist to reassure the player if he does not speak his language.

6.4.3 Language course

As there are so many foreign boys who need to learn English, the academy offers courses from elementary to upper intermediate level. The education and welfare officer, together with the language tutor, decides what level each boy is. Shortly after their arrival, the boys do a placement test in order to put them in the different language groups. The academy also does tests in which they want to find out what kind of learners the players are in order to use the most efficient teaching techniques. The players usually have about three language lessons a week. At the beginning of the course, the boys become familiar with football terminology. The academy has put together a world list with football terms in various languages which the boys already receive within their welcome package. From then on, a different topic is covered in each lesson. These topics are of general English nature, such as family, travelling or food. After the initial phase,

football vocabulary is only taught when required because most of the time the boys already have a good grasp of what is required. As teaching aids, she uses football biographies but also presents themes of general interest. Apart from general topics, the boys get help with their driving licence and things they need in their everyday lives. In the course the language tutor includes all four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). For her this is important because many of the players find a job in the media after their football career or they do charity work, coaching or are behind the camera. For all these things, the foreign players need all four skills (e. g. they must be able to read the teleprompter). For this media work it is very important to be able to express yourself and, therefore, she also teaches interviewing techniques.

It is the sole responsibility of the language tutor to decide which topics to cover. She also designs the whole course but no matter what level the boys are at, they all do the same topic. Apart from the language course, the foreign players mainly improve their English through English pop songs and match reports. The tutor teaches a General English course with a focus on football and the situations the academy players need. General English is important insofar as the boys have to be able to actively operate in the language. She develops the course curriculum and it has to be very flexible. Culture is also an element of the language course, even though the boys do not seem to realise this as they told me that they are not taught any culture. The tutor, for example, uses recordings with a range of different accents or managers with an Italian accent.

The boys get homework every lesson. If they do not do it they have to write a letter to apologise for the fact. It has to be mentioned that the homework cannot be compared to the homework given in school. Academy boys in this course usually have to read at home. They do not get a lot of exercises to complete at home. They are rarely motivated enough or, due to their football tasks, simply do not have the time or energy to do “normal” homework. Apart from the English course, some players complete their education via distance learning. One Swedish boy whose English was very good and who did not need to attend an

English course had not finished school in Sweden and was studying Swedish instead. He improved his English with his host family.

6.4.4 Language tutor

The language tutor at the academy is a linguist. She teaches about nine to ten foreign players. Whenever language problems occur, the academy tries to work with her. An Argentinean boy, for example, did not speak English but only talked to the boys who spoke Spanish. It was the language tutor's job to ease the boy away from the Spanish influence and speak English with him. The interview with the physiotherapist has shown that the language tutor is only present for her lessons. There would be a need for her during medical examinations in which the foreign boys have great problems communicating with the physiotherapist. The language tutor is never present at the training ground or when the coaches talk to the boys. Therefore, she has to rely on the input of the education and welfare officer or the coaches concerning the specific language problems of the foreign boys.

The club clearly distinguishes between football training and language learning. At the beginning foreign players get a translation of the most important football terms (e.g. ”man on” or “squeeze up”). This translation of football terminology exists in four languages. But it was compiled by members of the coaching staff and not the language tutor. The language tutor is employed full time and she has a number of staff. Initially, she worked as a translator for a company who worked with the academy. After she had left the company she came to work full time as a language tutor for the academy. She is in no way an expert on football.

6.5 Academy C

The third academy I visited was one of the biggest clubs in the Premier League. I established the contact once again through the education and welfare officer, who had previously been a teacher. The academy was situated on the outskirts of the main city. Upon arrival, I had to pass security personnel who told me where to find my contact person. Except for a bar across the street, security

measures were not as strict as in academy B. The layout was quite similar to the other academies, with endless pitches around the main building. My experiences in this academy were again different. I was allowed to observe the English lesson and to interview the two boys who were taking part. The education and welfare officer, along with the language tutor, sat with me for about two hours to answer all my questions. The club has been offering English courses for about a year. They do not have a great history of foreign players in the club so the need only arose recently and they are still trying to improve their course system.

6.5.1 The language course

The language tutor works very closely with the education and welfare officer. Together they put together a suitable syllabus for the language courses. In order to determine the knowledge of English of the foreign boys, the tutor does a lot of football related exercises. For example, he uses a DVD from one of the football world cups and turns the volume down. The boys are asked to comment the action on the pitch. Traditional grammar-based exercises do not work with the boys at this academy. Normally the boys come straight from their training so the language lessons have to be more interesting than in a standard classroom. One foreign boy I interviewed told me that he had problems concentrating because he came from training session where he had to do sprints with a weight jacket. It was very difficult for him to concentrate in his English lessons because he was very tired. Nevertheless, the boys are used to taking lessons after hard training sessions.

> *"The foreign boys see every other boy enter a class after football training finishes. We are coming off the field and everybody disappears to a different room to do their education."*

When a new boy arrives at the academy the education and welfare officer usually talks to the language tutor to decide which course the boy should follow. They also collaborate concerning the journal the boys should keep. At the club they do what they call "reflective practice". Every boy keeps a journal where he reflects back on the week, the games and the training sessions. For the foreign boys, this might be quite difficult so the language tutor helps them with it. For the English

boys this journal is part of their national qualification but for the foreign boys it is a means of expressing themselves and of talking about themselves. At the same time they get a chance to practice their written English skills.

On the one hand the club tries to prepare the boys for a life within the football world but on the other it is important that they learn general (language) skills as well:

> *"At the end of the day you're preparing them to be members of an English society not members of an English football club."*

The main focus of the language course is on verbs. The language tutor has compiled a list of 100 verbs which he presents and practises in the course. Within only a few weeks the boys know these verbs and have a better chance of understanding a conversation. Some of these verbs are quite advanced and would be taught only at an advanced level in a General English course.

Every three or four classes they do a telephone exercise. The language tutor takes local newspapers with him and asks the boys to choose one small advertisement. This can be an ad for a car, for a dog or any other thing people sell via the newspaper. The boys are required to call the person who advertises something and ask as many questions related to the topic as possible. The aim is to get the boys accustomed to telephone conversations, which are a lot more difficult than face-to-face conversations as there is no body language involved.

> *"You can understand the general direction and what their intention is face-to-face but on the phone it's very difficult. Someone might sound angry but they are just speaking up because they are on the phone."*

Within the course it is also possible for the boys to talk about the language problems they encounter while e.g. playing pool with their colleagues or during training sessions. They always pick up words or phrases that they do not understand so the language tutor tries to explain them.

> *"I had one player last year who asked me why people shout "melon". In fact they were shouting "man on" which he obviously did not understand."*

At the moment there are two foreign boys who attend English lessons at the academy. Their level of English differs quite significantly but it nevertheless works well teaching them in the same course. They both get the same exercises but obviously the demands on them are different. At the academy they usually teach English to the boys who are new to the club. The more advanced language learners additionally learn Spanish because they are interested in doing a different language.

When it comes to culture, the language tutor tries to teach as many idioms as possible because the boys struggle a lot when they are among themselves and want to communicate with their peers. Often this communication includes many idioms - in the area of England where this club is located, the local banter and humour can be quite brutal and difficult for foreigners to understand. The tutor sometimes spends a whole lesson explaining idioms to the boys who are then asked to form a sentence with each idiomatic expression.

Even though communication in daily life is very difficult for the foreign players, they also need to know a lot of words and phrases surrounding football. The language tutor told me that he was amazed by the number of questions the boys ask in class regarding aspects of football. Many boys think that they know “everything about football” but what they actually know are words like “goalkeeper”, “corner” or “goal” which are expressions that are used in the English version in many countries around the world. However, there is a lot more to football terms, for example, the anatomy or exercises and different equipment they need to use in the gym.

The language tutor tries to teach all four skills in his courses. He does not use any commercial course book but develops most of his exercises on his own. As in other academy courses, speaking and listening are the most important skills. The language tutor, for example, discusses games from the previous weekend with the boys. But the tutor emphasises writing and reading tasks. When I observed the lesson, the boys had to translate a short newspaper article from English to their mother tongue and back again. Or they would have to write a

letter to a different club with the topic “Why should I sign this player”. Through this exercise the boys practice football terms as well as terms and phrases around physical abilities. Information Technology (IT) is not used in the course but they watch television recordings and DVDs about football. Exams are part of the language course but their significance is different to a General English course. If the boys fail the test they just take it again. The final aim is that the foreign boys take the First Certificate.

6.5.2 The language tutor

The language tutor started teaching the senior players and has been teaching at the academy for about a year. He and the education and welfare officer are in the middle of the process of deciding how to best organise the language program for the foreign boys. Apart from him, there is also a woman who teaches the academy boys. She does not work at the academy but teaches the more advanced academy players at her house. Whereas the male tutor is very interested in football, the female tutor knows absolutely nothing about the sport. The language tutor thinks it is vitally important that he knows a lot about football. He would not call himself an expert but definitely a very interested fan of the game. This helps him to answer specific questions from the boys. The literal translation in a dictionary may not always be the way the word is used in football terms (e.g. the difference between the bar and the post).

As the club is at a very early stage with the English courses, the education and welfare officer is very open to all sorts of models for teaching and helping the boys. He even thinks of occasionally bringing the language tutor in on team meetings or on the field but he is not welcome at training sessions.

> *“They wouldn’t have psychologists present or they wouldn’t have therapists or counsellors near the players. The coaches would say, “No”. We deal with the players whether they can speak English or not.”*

In order to learn certain expressions himself the language tutor talks a lot with the boys. Through these talks he is able to find out what different nationalities call certain things or behaviours related to football. There are also very small things –

what is called the near and the far post in England is called the first and the second post in other countries. Furthermore, in order to assemble a word list for the boys, the language tutor writes down certain expressions when he watches football on television. During one match he sometimes writes down about 15 words or phrases that he uses in class.

The language tutor also teaches foreign senior players of the club. He tries to provide some practical information for them in addition to language training. There are little things that may be very important for senior players, for example, it is very useful for them to know that if they dial 141 before they dial a number their number becomes anonymous.

6.5.3 Foreign players

The foreign academy boys usually live with “house parents”. These are local families recruited by the club. Frequently, they are also supporters and fans of the club. The education and welfare officer is convinced that the vast majority of English is learnt because the boys are placed with families. They normally spend five days a week in the academy where they have training and education from morning until five or six in the evening. Additionally, they have a match every Saturday. As the boys spend so much time in the academy and also in an English family, the club has not yet seen the necessity of assembling a welcome or introduction package. The boys learn relatively quickly how to behave and where the differences are in their new culture.

It is amazing how well the local boys behave towards the foreigners. There is a big debate going on in the English league (as in many top football leagues) whether there are too many foreigners coming in who reduce the opportunities for the English players. Considering the many foreigners in the English Premier League, the education and welfare officer was amazed that there are so few problems between the local and the foreign boys. They seem to get along quite well and even support each other. Some boys arrive in England with a very good command of English. Most of these are Scandinavians. Their advantage is that most of the films in Scandinavia are shown in their original version with

Scandinavian subtitles. Some of these boys even have an American accent from watching Hollywood movies.

The academy boys have a scholarship contract which requires them to study for two years. During the afternoons, when the English boys are doing English-type qualifications, the foreign boys are learning English. Again the situation is totally different for the foreign senior players. The do not see their fellow players attend courses. Rather, they see them disappear straight after training so it is quite hard for the foreign players to have enough motivation to attend an English course. It can happen, however, that when the coach signs a player he tells him to follow a course. It is nevertheless often difficult for the senior players to have enough motivation for an English course. They do want to improve their language skills (especially when they realise that the coach knows that their English is not good and they have problems communicating with their teammates) but it takes a lot of effort on their part. When they do take classes, they always take their girlfriends or wives with them. In most cases, it is the player's partner who needs to organise life outside the football club and who needs to be able to communicate with people. As these are different requirements to those of the academy, the club is assembling an induction package for the professional players and their wives and girlfriends.

The academy players get a lot of help from the club and the house parents when it comes to setting up bank accounts or passing the driving licence exam. The problem here is not too little but sometimes too much help. The boys become dependent on other people, and lose any self-reliance they have. So the education and welfare officer must always find a good balance between support and individual responsibility.

> *"So my role with the younger players is to not give them the answers – it's to help them find the answers themselves."*

The education and welfare officer always tries to challenge the boys in order for them to learn. On one occasion, a boy who had never travelled by plane on his own had to fly somewhere. He was very nervous but instead of just taking him by

the hand and walking him through the airport procedures, the education and welfare officer asked the boy to walk *him* through the whole process.

6.5.4 The coaches

The coaches have their own way of dealing with the foreign boys. They explain the exercises without any respect for the foreign boys and whether the player understands is a different matter. However, the coaches try to use certain language on certain occasions but the boys might be even more confused because they have become used to distinct expressions. The coaches do not work with the language tutor (yet). It is, rather, the foreign boys who come to the tutor with certain language problems they have encountered during their training sessions.

The education and welfare officer told me that normally the coaches would not put performance problems of boys down to their lack of English but rather to their lack of football skills. They are of the opinion that “football” is a universal language and everybody understands “football”. If a player does not understand or does not put the coach’s feedback into practice, the coach will draw the same conclusions that he would when he speaks to an English boy. This is because very often the English boys do not perform the way they should even though they understand the language. As the club does not have a very long history of working with foreign boys, the coaches do not think of language problems first when a boy shows deficits in training sessions.

When it comes to educational matters, the education and welfare officer is the most important person for the boys. In collaboration with parents and teachers he builds an educational package for each boy individually. Some boys are so overwhelmed by their new environment, the new culture they are living in and with the language they have to learn, that for the first few months their education package includes English only. Boys who have a good command of English can concentrate on other educational matters and some of them follow their post-16 curriculum via distance learning. The club tries to find the best solution for each player which means that they try hard to equip every boy with additional skills

apart from football. Some of the boys will never make it as professional players, so they need to have a backup plan.

6.6 Academy D

It was not possible for me to visit academy D (which is the academy of a very big and successful Premier League club) personally, but I managed to meet the language tutor who teaches academy as well as senior players and thus has a very good insight into the situation of foreign players in general. It was quite an achievement to obtain the contact details of the language tutor. The club employs many famous and successful foreign players and is therefore extremely secretive about their players and staff. The language tutor himself was very surprised that the player liaison officer of the club gave me his phone number. Normally, they assume that people with these requests must be journalists who want to spy on the clubs in order to get a great story. But he was very friendly and after a few emails and telephone calls he agreed to meet me and have an interview with me. I conducted an extensive interview with him, which started out with structured and semi-structured questions and became a very lively and informative discussion.

6.6.1 Language Problems

Although I received a thorough insight into the club's teaching and learning situation, I did not really learn much about the language problems of the boys. Given the fact that the language tutor was the only source of information concerning academy A, I could not find out very much about the daily linguistic problems of the foreign boys during training sessions or matches. From what the language tutor told me about the boys and their language needs, it is fairly safe to assume, however, that the boys in academy A struggle with similar problems as their colleagues in other academies.

6.6.2 Foreign senior players

The language tutor also teaches foreign senior players of the club. This is quite a challenge because the main barrier for them is not the fact that they should learn

English but the fact that they should learn at all. The young players are used to a certain routine of attending school each morning. They are used to using the computer or picking up a pen and paper each day. The first team players have not done this for a very long time, if ever, in their lives. Through playing football so well, they have managed to avoid doing the things children their age have to do, such as going to school and doing homework. So by the time they have become millionaires or multimillionaires, they are not used to being told exactly where to be at a certain time. For the language tutor it is very difficult to persuade them to attend classes regularly. Because of this lack of consistency, it is very difficult to organise language courses for the senior players of the club.

Initially, the foreign players were taught in small groups. Later on the players were given the choice to opt for group teaching or private lessons and all of them chose the private lesson. The language tutor was not happy about it because group teaching could have been very useful for the players, but since they are learning English in their free time, they cannot be forced to do anything. Sometimes the players are not aware how important it is for them to speak English. During training sessions they get by, but there are players who live in England with their families and they cannot endlessly rely on the agent who represents them. What happens when their son/daughter is ill at four o'clock in the morning, and the doctor must be summoned?

Courses for foreign senior players take place at the home of the respective player. The language tutor then spends about two hours there, where he also teaches wives, parents, brothers, sisters or even sisters-in-law. It is quite difficult to encourage enormously successful players to improve their English skills. It is even difficult for the tutor to motivate them to book another lesson with him. So it always is a great personal reward if, at the end of a lesson, the player asks for another one. Once they realise that the tutor is a nice guy with a lot of experience who can help them during their stay at the club, they want to take more lessons. But they travel a lot, are on international duty or have extra sponsor

commitments and after two or three stressful weeks they would rather spend their meager spare time with their family than taking English lessons.

What makes life a bit hard for the language tutor is the fact that there are many players in the first team who speak at least one foreign language and can help players who do not understand or speak English. There is one player in particular who speaks five languages very well. He grew up bilingually and he is willing to help his colleagues. This is great because it solves language issues very quickly during training sessions but it is simultaneously counterproductive because the foreign players who do not understand English do not really feel the need to learn the language.

Even though the language tutor tries to teach culture it is not always easy with the senior players. He can present various accents and explain certain cultural particularities, but most of the senior players are very famous and it is not possible to just take them out for a walk and show them the culture they are living in.

6.6.3 Language courses for academy players

The club employs many foreign players. As in any other club, they come from all around the world and have different educational and social backgrounds. There is a growing contingent of Portuguese speakers. They not only come from Portugal but also from Brazil and African Portuguese-speaking countries. The club offers a lot of support to the foreign players and their families. The young players are all here with family members. Most of them have not really studied in their own language, let alone English, and their parents have studied even less.

When the club signs a player it does not really matter whether he speaks English. As in the other clubs, the football potential is what really matters and nobody really asks about the player's English skills. It is just assumed that he will get by and probably attend a language course in order to better integrate into the team. A large number of foreign players who come to play for academy D are illiterate. When they join the club, the language tutor cannot just start with his

English lessons but has to teach them basic reading and writing skills first. Naturally, this slows the language learning down a bit. This illiteracy is also one reason why the club is so secretive. They need to be very careful that such facts do not reach the media.

The players who are literate often struggle to concentrate. They are not used to regular schooling, reading, writing or doing homework. For example, one page of a traditional grammar textbook is very hard for them. To have this much text on a page is overwhelming and the teacher has to simplify and make everything clearer. He uses the grammar exercises of traditional textbooks but shortens the theoretical explanations dramatically. They are seldom longer than a few sentences. There is also a lot more revision and consolidation than in a traditional English course. Due to matches with the national team and different tournaments, it is not possible to have the courses on a regular basis. When the break between courses is too long, the boys forget most of what they have learnt in the previous course and much needs to be revised. The academy tries to provide the language courses on a daily basis, so even though the boys have problems learning English and getting accustomed to the different sounds, they hear English every day in and out of the classroom. Thus it is unavoidable that they pick up the language sooner or later.

Expectations of the club concerning the level of English are very low. After years of experience with foreign players in the Premiership, the clubs know exactly the limits of speech of these boys.

> *"They don't expect the same kind of results that you would have at a private school. You can't compare the two things – it's very different at football clubs."*

For the clubs it is sufficient to see that the boys are making an effort. Usually, it is the attitude of the players that counts.

The courses at the academy take place on a daily basis primarily in the mornings. They are compulsory for the young foreign players but most of them want to take them anyway. They realise that without English they will have

problems integrating into the team. There is no official curriculum for the course. It is up to the language tutor to plan the details. What is very important is constant revising and reminding the boys of things they have already learnt. Progress is very slow and, as the language tutor put it, “we need perhaps six weeks for topics that you would cover in six days with a general course”. As this is the case, he does not really see the need for a very detailed and sophisticated curriculum.

> *“To be honest because levels are so low, so elementary in terms of what we do, the grammar that we look at, there can’t really be that many ways of doing it.”*

Despite all the difficulties, the language tutor has managed to bring the boys from beginners’ to a solid pre-intermediate level in only three months. He tries to teach all four skills but as in the other academies, speaking and listening are most important. He uses DVDs and audio recordings but IT as a teaching aid is not used at all. After some months, the language tutor usually starts to use newspaper articles. It is clear that the learners do not understand everything that is written. At the beginning he looks at statistical information presented in a very clear format, such as league tables, top scorers and results. He then gives them some match reports to read. The language tutor encourages the boys to watch football games in English. They normally watch exclusively in their mother tongues so commentaries of football matches are quite easy for them to grasp because they have an excellent knowledge of the game.

The language tutor tries to incorporate as many games and quizzes as possible in his lessons. It is in the players’ natures to be competitive so games usually work very well with them. He tries to include many competitions and challenges. For example, the language tutor will test the players on irregular verbs and the players will test him on a few things in their language – the loser pays for dinner. Furthermore, the language tutor uses a lot of vocabulary drills as it is important that the players do as much repetition as possible. He encourages the players to use memo stickers at their home. They should write words on each sticker and put it on places where they are clearly visible in order to remember them better.

What is very important is that during the courses the players have to complete exercises in which they show that they have understood what has been taught.

The language tutor tries to differentiate as much as possible by using different exercises and methods for different players. He avoids reading and writing and puts his emphasis on speaking and listening. For this purpose, he uses a lot of audio materials inside and outside the classroom. The players listen to the materials in class but they also get CDs which they can take home. The tutor encourages them to watch TV. News bulletins run a few times every hour and after having watched a few of them they know what the news story is and can concentrate more on the language aspect.

Purely grammatical explanations do not work at all with the academy players so the tutor tries to use a lot of dialogues. The language they hear should not be too abstract in order for them to remember it. Grammatical explanations which would fill two pages in a traditional course book are always shortened. The players just get a minimum of two sentences – if possible in their mother tongue – in order not to overburden them. Homework is given in the course but the problem is that the boys are often away or do not have time so they have to start all over again in the lesson. This is not only tiring for the tutor but also a negative thing for the boys. For them it is extra hard to start over again and to get into their routine.

The language tutor teaches a lot of football terminology. The problem is that the boys pick up many words (especially the swear words) during training sessions. They also know a lot of football verbs passively but they do not know how to use them properly. What they need in their everyday football lives are basic terms (such as cross, shoot, mark, etc.) and names of the players' positions. It is also important for the coaches that the boys know these basic football terms. There are many multi-linguists among the coaching staff which can work against the language tutor. Furthermore, a lot of colloquial phrases are taught in the course. This language (e.g. cheers mate, fingers crossed, over the moon, etc.) would normally not be part of an English course but the players pick this language up

because they hear it all the time so it is better that they know what they are hearing or saying.

Culture is a very important aspect of the language course. The tutor tries to explain the local vernacular of the region to the players. He wants to show them as much as possible of the place they live in.

> *"I go out with them and show them different things and aspects of the place they live just to remind them that it's much bigger than the little oasis that they frequent."*

After all, these young adults are completely unaware of their circumstances because they usually have other people to inform them on what is happening around them. They do not normally pick up newspapers and have a look themselves. The language tutor tries to explain the local traditions, especially around festive seasons such as Christmas.

6.6.4 The language tutor

The language tutor has been teaching for 21 years even though he never really formally studied foreign languages. He holds a degree in Political Sciences and has lived in various countries. He speaks Italian, Spanish and Portuguese which helps him a lot with the foreign players. He started as a language tutor for the players of the first team but got more and more involved with the academy players. During a successful season, it is very hard to get the first team players to keep up with their English lessons, so he mainly teaches academy and some of the reserve players. Like his colleagues in the other academies, he also collaborates more or less closely with the nutritionist. At the club they do not have a special nutritionist brochure so he has to work some language details out with the nutritionist.

The language tutor is not a football expert. He has not played at any level and without having done so, he would not consider himself an expert. According to him, even the young players have a very good and deep understanding of the game which he will never have. However, he does not think that you have to be a

football expert in order to teach the players. Furthermore, the level of English he is teaching is very basic.

> *"I mean football is one of my big passions so it's a dream job for me. I spend a lot of time watching and reading football, probably too much time. The point is, because all the people that I've taught so far are genuine beginners or elementary and even the football vocabulary that we do just to practise as much as possible, some kind of authentic conversation is still quite basic."*

Even though he loves what he is doing, he thinks that it would even be better to teach football managers or senior coaches. He thinks that football players are not particularly disciplined people outside their football life so teaching them is quite hard. But he believes that with managers or coaches. the situation would be a lot different. The language tutor sees an advantage to being male in the football environment. In addition to his teaching, he also does some interpreting and translating work and has to be able to go into the dressing room or be able to attend medical examinations. This would not be possible for a female teacher.

6.7 Academy E

I obtained the data for academy E via questionnaires that were completed by the language tutor and three academy players. In contrast to the clubs so far, club E does not play in the Premier League but in the Football League Championship, which is the second-highest division overall in the English football league system. The academy, however, competes in the highest youth league. The club has always been known as a family club. This philosophy is also handed down to the club's academy. The senior players often attend training with the junior teams and talk about their experiences. The academy players have the chance to get advice from senior players who have already made it to where the young ones want to go.

6.7.1 Foreign players

Usually when the boys arrive at the academy their level of English is elementary but most of them have attended a language course at school. For them it is compulsory to take English lessons when they start playing at the academy.

They usually spend about seven hours a week in the English course and are usually very willing to learn the language. Their language and also cultural backgrounds are very diverse as they come from Slovakia, China, Poland and even Somalia. Before signing their contract, they were asked about their knowledge of English because the club needed to know whether they had to take an English course, but this was the sole reason for the enquiry, as a lack of or ability in English did not have any consequences. Academy players usually join the club at the age of 15 or 16 and the three boys who completed the questionnaire had been in England between five months and one and a half years. At the time when they filled in the questionnaires, they were 16 and 17 years old. As in academy A, they all live in a lodge together. Thus, the foreign boys have the chance to speak English 24 hours a day.

The academy usually does not work with official interpreters but as there are some boys from the same country, they often help each other when language problems occur. Most of the players actively try to improve their English through English pop-songs and movies. Furthermore, their fellow players support them a lot when they make an effort and try to speak or understand English. As football is their highest priority, they do not always have enough time or do not take enough care to learn English. They always seem to have more important objectives. All three players explicitly stated that they only learnt English during their courses. They rarely find the time or the motivation to learn outside the courses. This makes it especially hard for the tutor. As the players do not actively learn much vocabulary, she has to repeat and explain certain words or phrases quite often. But compared to traditional English courses, the academy players have the advantage that they are surrounded by English 24 hours a day so it is quite easy for them to pick up words that are important for them.

6.7.2 Language course

The English course takes place twice a week and is organised in groups. It is the sole responsibility of the language tutor to decide which topics to cover. No official curriculum or course plan exists. Homework is an integral part of the

language course but the players do not always do it. Furthermore, for the academy boys there are exams on a regular basis whereas the senior players do not have any form of assessment. Generally, the boys start the course at elementary level and attend until upper-intermediate level. Of the four skills, speaking is the most important. The other skills are taught as well but do not receive as much emphasis as speaking. To train these skills, the language tutor uses reading comprehensions, word lists, essay writing and a lot of quizzes and games. Grammar has a high priority in her teaching but of course always depends on the individual learner's needs. She tries to avoid too much teacher talk as the players do not like it because it reminds them of school. What works best for her and the boys are short presentations merged with a lot or practice. Most of the players are very self-confident and they are not embarrassed when they make mistakes.

One important aspect of the language course is English culture. The language tutor teaches culture mainly through reading magazines, organising projects and various trips to town, to the pub, etc. Dialect and slang words do not play a role in the course. One of the greatest challenges is the lack of continuity in the course. The foreign players often have longer breaks in their English course because they are away with their national teams or have special training sessions. The main teaching aid is a traditional course book with the respective workbook for the learners. The language tutor tries to use the Internet as often as possible but she did not specify what activities the learners engage in when working online.

6.7.3 Language tutor

The language tutor was found through a website where she had put an advertisement offering English lessons. The club got in contact with her and now she is teaching the academy boys. At the time of the questionnaire she had been working for the club for four months. She is Polish and had been teaching in a secondary school in Poland as part of her program at university. She is not an expert on football and this had no relevance whatsoever when she started the job. Apart from her, there is one other language tutor working for the club. She

mainly teaches the academy boys but occasionally she also teaches senior players and their wives or girlfriends in separate courses.

Mostly, she does not speak the mother tongue of the boys which is no problem for her as she tries to use English almost all of the time. Sometimes she uses Polish with the Polish players when she explains some grammar to them. The language tutor is never present at training sessions or games to identify the words and phrases the players might need on the pitch. She gets this knowledge through some literature which she did not specify. For her it would be desirable to have some more football relevant materials available.

6.8 Academy F

I gathered the data about academy F through a questionnaire which was filled in by the language tutor and five academy players. The club plays in the English Premier League and has many foreign players in its academy. The academy players share the recently expanded complex with the senior squad. There are eight outdoor pitches for the academy and four for the senior players. The indoor complex is a state-of-the-art building with an indoor training arena, lounge, viewing areas for parents and changing rooms for each age group of players.

The club has opted for a patient approach. People in charge (of whom quite a few are ex-schoolteachers) have been at the academy since its opening in 1998. The club's recent success is also due to the good youth development work of the club. Many current senior players came through the club's academy. The club estimates that about one-third of the academy players have signed contracts at the age of 18. This is almost twice the average of most other clubs. The academy works closely with the schools the boys attend. If a boy neglects his work in school it can happen – with parental backing – that a player is withdrawn from matches. The education and welfare officer has a very important role to play. He tries to make sure that the boys do not consider themselves professional footballers but rather as schoolboys who are talented players. Considering that only 1 per cent of the academy boys make their way to stardom, it is particularly

important that the boys get a sound education to fall back on when their football life is over.

6.8.1 Foreign players

The foreign players I received the questionnaires from have been playing in England between two months and 18 months and are all between 15 and 16 years of age. The positions they play on the field are goalkeeper, centre midfield, right/left winger and striker. Their level of English was “average” and “quite ok” as they all had learnt English at school. Similar to the other academies, the boys have training every day and attend college twice a week. Three of them answered that nobody had asked them about their level of English before they signed their contract. Two of the foreign players stated that they had to do a test in order to see whether their English was good enough to attend college.

The club offers a language course for all foreign players. The boys who are more advanced usually attend the course once a week for three hours. The club does not work with interpreters but there are other foreign boys who come from the same country so they could help each other. In general, the level of English of the foreign players at the academy varies tremendously, from almost fluent to no understanding of English. According to the experience of the language tutor, Scandinavians, Germans and Austrians, for example, learn English to a good level in their home countries but South Americans and Africans often have no knowledge of English when they come to play for the academy. But almost all foreign players are very keen on learning the language as fast as possible and are willing to invest a lot of effort. The language tutor thinks that most of them are embarrassed when they make mistakes when speaking English but all five players answered that they are not embarrassed at all when they make mistakes. Four out of the five boys noted that they actively try to improve their language skills by reading English newspapers or by watching English films.

The language tutor helps the foreign players to prepare for press conferences or other special occasions where they have to speak English. When it comes to learning English, many foreign players lack confidence. It is also very difficult to

regularly teach the football players as they also lack the time. As in the other academies, many boys play for their national teams and travel quite a lot. Therefore, it is difficult to teach them all on a regular basis.

The local boys are instructed to help the foreigners learn English. Usually they speak more slowly or repeat words that the foreign boys did not understand. Three of the foreign boys also stated that the most important phrases at the beginning were, “Could you please explain again” and “Could you speak slower please”. For them, questions in general were very important. The other two boys noted that words and phrases related to football were most helpful for them. At the beginning, all five boys struggled with the language as the English spoken in England is a lot different to the English taught at school. For them, the Irish and Scottish accent, as well as slang words, were and still are most difficult to understand. It is interesting to see that three of the boys answered that at the beginning it was more important for them to understand the fellow players and two of them said that it was more important to understand the coach.

It seems to be important for the club to make the boys understand the “code of behaviour” which includes how to behave in public, sanctions, dealing with the media, etc. One boy could not remember how these things were made clear to him. Three just answered that “they told us about it”, but one boy specifically said that there was a “special lady who speaks my language and who explained everything to me”. All five players answered that their fellow foreign players were most helpful in learning English and understanding the coach and other academy staff. It was comforting for them to turn to somebody who speaks their language.

6.8.2 Language course

The number of lessons per week varies according to the language needs of the players. Basic English is taught at least three hours per week. There is always homework for the boys which they normally do as “they have no choice”. Different levels of individual courses are offered every day. The language tutor is the only person responsible for course design. There is no general curriculum but the courses as well as the corresponding teaching materials are designed

specifically for each player. Assessment takes place on a regular basis. Usually the players attend the courses until they are fluent in English or at least until a good command of the language is achieved.

Even though all four skills are taught and dealt with in the course, the ability to communicate an idea is the most important skill needed by football players. The main methods and exercises that are used in the course are: listening comprehensions, reading comprehensions, dialogues, quizzes, games, pictures, word lists and translations. Essay writing is only rarely used. Culture is also dealt with in the courses in the form of dialect or slang words. Traditional written methods that are used in General English courses do not work at all with the academy boys. Oral/aural and short written materials that are humorous work best with the boys. Except for DVDs, IT or new media are not used in the courses. The players themselves stated that they benefit a lot from using MP3 players and the Internet when learning English. Furthermore, they like the word lists which they get from their tutor. According to the language tutor, the ideal course for football professionals are ones which are tailor-made. The academy players themselves are of the opinion that listening and speaking are the most important skills they need.

6.8.3 Language tutor

The language tutor officially applied for the job which was advertised as “having a language teaching element” in it. She has been working for the club for five years but is not a football expert and she is the only language tutor working for this particular club. According to her, a language tutor working for a football club should at least speak two foreign languages and have travel experience as well as experience in living abroad. Only thus can a language tutor really see where the problems lie when someone has to cope with living in a foreign country. She teaches academy players, senior players and sometimes also wives and girlfriends, but never all together in the same course.

The language tutor, along with the other staff at the academy, strongly encourages the foreign boys to actively improve their English skills outside the

courses as well. Two of the five players answered the question how they see the ideal language tutor with they do not know, two stated that he/she should be helpful and friendly and one boy specifically answered that “he should be a man who loves football like me”. As in all football academies the coaches were the ones who tried to explain the exercises on the pitch. They often used visual aids or tried to speak slower with the foreign boys. They do not collaborate with the language tutor, who would be willing to help with language problems on the pitch but who is not allowed to attend training sessions.

7 Findings and analysis

Football clubs acknowledge that it is important for foreign players to learn the language as quickly as possible in order to communicate with one another. One way of dealing with language problems is to hire players who already have a good command of the language they need in their host country. Biermann (2009:193) states that English clubs have traditionally employed players from Scandinavian countries because their English is good and they normally have no problems integrating into the host culture. The second way of dealing with language problems is that the foreign players learn English. Even if in some teams there are more foreigners than natives, it is essential for the foreigners to learn the language of the country they live in.

The visits to the academy and the interviews, talks and discussions with players, coaches, language tutors and physiotherapists have revealed very interesting results. Some of them were expected, others were not and can lead to possible improvements for players and academies alike. Overall, I have to state that I am very impressed by the organisation and the work of English football academies. What the interviews clearly showed is that every academy tries to help the boys as much as possible. It is important for every club that the foreign players learn the language as quickly as possible in order to integrate into the team and the new surroundings. Bourke (2002) conducted a study among young Irish professional footballers who came to play in England. Only 14% of the players in her sample stated that they settled into the new environment within one month of arrival. If one bears in mind that these players come from a relatively similar culture and speak the language of the “host country”, it is no wonder foreign players need a lot of support and time to feel comfortable in their new surroundings. Furthermore, the Irish players also emphasise that among the major problems are the absence of family ties, the absence of close friends and the first time living away from home.

I have already mentioned before that I only had limited insight into football clubs and academies. Nevertheless, I try to start the venture of summing up and analysing the findings of the football academies I visited and combining theoretical and practical aspects of teaching and learning which could path the way for a framework of an ESP course for foreign football players in the Premier League. Theoretical background is provided in order to present a full picture of needs, tutoring options and support mechanisms for foreign football players.

7.1 Communication problems and the need to learn English

At football academies, players of diverse cultural backgrounds interact with each other in various ways. The most important variant of interaction is communication. Lavric et al. (2008:379) state that communication has three main tasks in football: (1) to convey information, (2) as a means of facilitating integration in the team (and as a consequence integration in the club, society and culture) and (3) to convey emotions. Similarly Kramsch (2004:249) argues that, "language as communicative practice is tied to a person's position in time, space, social and historical relations, and his/her social and emotional identity". Within the football environment there is not only verbal but also non-verbal communication which takes the form of facial expressions, gestures and body language.

With so many foreign players earning their livings in the Premier League, every club is faced with similar communication problems.

> *"The most important is that they know the basics to integrate to a point because if they can't speak or understand the language, whether it has to deal with the coach or not, if it means that they can't integrate they feel left out. It is more important for the social part before it comes to football because if they don't interact socially this will affect their performance and there is also a group cohesion."*
>
> Coach of academy A

This quotation sums up the view of academy staff and players very well. There is no doubt among the academy staff that the foreign boys need to know English in

order to integrate into the team. It is very important for the boys to understand their coaches. During individual meetings with coaches, it is essential for the boys to understand as much as they can – ideally everything – of what the coaches tell them. Sometimes it is not enough to just grasp the gist of a conversation, especially when there are technical or tactical things that are important for a match. There are many cases during training sessions where it is very important that the player not only knows roughly but exactly what is required of him. Even though I know that the players pick up the language quite quickly, I still think that language skills and performance on the pitch are closely related. We are faced here with a multifaceted problem. How do players know from sheer observation that they do the exercise correctly? One might answer that the coach will immediately tell him. But here is exactly where language comes in. There is only so much information you can convey by demonstration. When exercises become more complex there is no way around avoiding verbal explanation. How do coaches know whether a player did not understand the instruction (which can also happen with English speaking boys) or is just tired, unable to perform the specific task, not motivated, etc.? If the foreign player does not speak English very well, he is not able to tell his coach what the problem is. In some instances, especially when movement skills are refined or scaled, it may appear that the player performs a task correctly. But as the exercise is only about a very small and subtle movement, the coach may not see whether the exercise is really done correctly. In these cases, verbal explanations of slight differences in movement might be very helpful. Even though many players - senior and youth players alike - are of the opinion that they know the language of football, this is not the case. Most of them realise that the language of football is much more than simple words like “goal” or “pass”. They all encounter problems when they, for example, have to talk to the physiotherapist and explain their injuries.

It is clear that foreign players first and foremost need to perform well on the pitch. A prerequisite (apart from football talent) for this is to understand the coach(es) and fellow players and to integrate into the system of the team. Furthermore, every academy player gets time during a training day to work on his weaknesses.

In order to identify them and to be able to find suitable exercises to improve, the foreign player needs to understand the coach's explanations. Sometimes only slight changes in certain movements are necessary to improve the end result significantly. Good knowledge of English is essential for the foreign players to enable them to improve their performance.

It is equally important for young foreign players to be able to make themselves understood off the pitch and to be able to interact and integrate socially. Most of them live with families and it makes their lives much easier when they can communicate properly with them. In many cases, they live abroad alone and need to be able to manage their lives. Without English this is very hard to master. What makes life easier for the foreign academy players in contrast to their senior colleagues is the acclimatisation phase. They usually arrive at the club during pre-season training where there are no official matches. Thus, they have a little time to adjust to their new situation. They can get accustomed to the academy staff, their coaching methods, life on and off the pitch as well as the English language. The problem they share with their older counterparts is that, even if their English is quite good, they do not understand the regional dialect or the particular accent of coaches who come from all parts of the country. Accents which differ greatly from the Standard English foreign boys had learnt in school are most difficult to understand for them. Additionally, nearly every foreign player told me that, especially at the beginning, he had great difficulties adjusting to the speed of delivery.

In many teams, especially in senior teams, are players who speak the same mother tongue of the newcomers. On the one hand, this is a great help for the foreign players who come to England and do not understand the language. On the other hand, this can be very counterproductive. Some footballers think that there is no need for them to learn the langue as quickly as possible. What is more, in such cases foreigners of the same nationality tend to form small groups, which has negative effects on the team spirit.

7.2 Different nationalities – different language problems

It came as no surprise to note that there are huge differences concerning language abilities and language knowledge across nationalities. Generally speaking, foreign players from central European countries have fewer problems with English. No matter what schools they attended, they have at least a minimum of English knowledge. This makes it easier for them to follow the English lessons at the academy. They also feel very confident that they will be able to communicate with their fellow players after only a few weeks' or months' courses.

Players from Scandinavian countries usually have a good command of English (as has been reported there are exceptions as well). They learn English at school but their great advantage is that all films in the cinemas and on TV are shown in their original English version. That way the young players are used to the speed and the pronunciation of English. Some of them even speak with an American accent. These players do not usually take an English course but follow alternative educational paths. Some learn another language or others finish their national education via distance learning.

Footballers who come from countries outside Europe struggle with more problems. There are particularly two groups of players that can be distinguished: Portuguese-speaking players from Portugal and Brazil, and players from Africa. Portuguese speakers have great problems with the pronunciation of English. They struggle because some sounds simply do not exist in their mother tongue. African players encounter the same problems but, additionally, quite a few of them are illiterate. This means that they not only need to learn the English language but also reading and writing skills, if they want to follow a course. Therefore, language tutors are confronted with additional challenges.

7.3 Foreign senior players as language learners

Even though the main focus of this study is adolescent football players, it is interesting to look at their adult counterparts and to compare them to their younger colleagues. Senior players, like adolescent players, attend language courses at the clubs which are mostly held by the same tutors who also teach the academy players. In some clubs, the senior players are taught alone but in others they attend their course together with their wives or girlfriends. Sometimes the language course does not take place at the club premises. In such cases, the language tutor may even come to the home of the respective player.

The senior players are often the role models for the younger ones. The academy players are keen on talking to the senior players when they have the chance to meet them. When they work as ball boys at senior matches, they even try to get their football shirts and sell them online. What is more, they constantly try to imitate their idols on the pitch and aspire to become as good and successful as their older counterparts. Thus it is appreciable that the attitude of the senior players towards language learning can also motivate or demotivate their younger colleagues. Senior players are much more lax with their language efforts. Some of them are of the opinion that they will only play in England for a few years and, therefore, it is not worth the effort of actively learning the language. Furthermore, they sometimes do not see the need to speak the language fluently as clubs employ player liaison officers who help the foreign players with all aspects of their lives. In many cases they are (multi) millionaires who are – off the pitch - used to doing whatever they want. It is quite difficult for a language tutor to explain to somebody who is absolutely independent and can buy whatever he wants, that it is necessary to make a lot of effort to sit down and learn a language, when he could be spending his scarce free time with his family and enjoying his luxury. What makes the football life easier for senior players than for academy players is the fact that they already are already skilled players who have undergone the technical and tactical training in their mother tongue in their home countries. They can get by with what they call the “universal language of

football". They have already come across most of the exercises in one way or another and therefore know what is required of them. This means that on the pitch they do not encounter too many language problems – but they have them off the pitch.

There is a huge difference between foreign senior and academy players when it comes to the aims of learning English. For both, it is of first and foremost importance to be able to talk to and understand the coach and fellow players. Foreign senior players are faced with the additional challenge of being able to talk to the press and give press conferences or interviews. Giving interviews with the help of an interpreter for live television broadcasts would create a certain distance between the player and his fans.

There are always exceptions but football players who have made it to the Premier League all share distinct characteristics. Nearly all of them have devoted their whole life to football. Traditional education has been an important factor for very few of them. So it is fairly safe to assume that they are not like "normal" adults when it comes to learning. They have had a lot of experience but most likely not within the educational field but on the football pitch. Teaching in general becomes very difficult as many of the successful senior players have not had a normal schooling routine. As adolescents they were already exceptional players and their football talent rather than their education was cultivated. This means that as adults it is very hard to make them follow a course routine. Furthermore, as millionaires they are used to doing what they like rather than being told by somebody to be somewhere at a certain time and engage themselves in exercises outside the football pitch. As many of them have not done so as adolescents, they are as adults not used to learning, writing or reading. It is a huge effort for them to sit down and try to learn a new language. For them, the greatest barrier is not the unfamiliar language but the fact that they should learn something other than football. Apart from this barrier, their motivation for attending an English lesson is not so great because as foreigners they are the only ones who have to put some extra effort into their daily routines. All their

colleagues leave the club after the training session and as a foreigner one should spend more time there in order to learn English.

Therefore, I claim that most characteristics that are given adult learners (e.g. self-direction, self-motivation, autonomous learning) do not apply to the learning processes of foreign football players simply because due to their athletic development they have not had the time and experience spent within traditional learning environments. For most of them, compulsory education was something they had to do but did not enjoy too much. One language tutor told me that it is very important to design language lessons in football clubs a lot differently to lessons in schools because the players would otherwise not be motivated enough to learn English. There are, however, natural differences between adults and adolescents which arise from the simple fact of the age difference. The distinction between senior and academy players within football clubs is a very straightforward one. Until the age of 18, players are employed with academies and from then on they may play for the senior team. Senior players have undergone much more personal development. They may have partners or wives and children for whom they feel responsible, have built or bought houses, travelled around the world, etc. All these experiences have changed their personalities. They naturally have different interests than adolescent academy players. This should also be reflected in topics of the language courses.

Language tutors are faced with many challenges when they teach senior players. First and foremost, senior players do not place English courses very high on their priority list. All senior players I interviewed were of the opinion that they do not need to learn football terms as football uses universal language which they already know. The truth of the matter is that they all know the standard expressions but when it comes to, e.g. injuries or body parts, most of them do not really know what these expressions mean in English. It is very important, especially at the beginning, to make them familiar with the terms and phrases that are used on the pitch. Only then are foreign players able to integrate themselves into the team as fast as possible.

During a successful season it is very hard for a language tutor to teach senior players. If a player plays for one of the big clubs in England, it most likely happens that he has to play Premier League matches, Champions League matches, Cup matches as well as matches with his national team. Apart from motivation, it is first and foremost a problem of time to follow a course regularly. What is more, with senior players it is not the language tutor but the player who schedules and defines the number of lessons. So when he comes home after a busy week, he would rather spend his scarce free time with his family than with the language tutor learning English, especially in the big clubs where there are players who have the same mother tongue and can translate and even work as interpreters. The negative effect for the team is that they usually form small internal groups and are not fully integrated into the rest of the team.

Senior players do not spend a lot of time at the premises of their clubs. They normally train in the mornings. After their training session they have lunch together and then go about their ways. Even though senior players only have training in the mornings and theoretically a lot of time to learn English, they are in most cases not really motivated to do so. They only need English on the pitch because outside the football club they try to keep to their own linguistic environment by reading newspapers and watching television in their mother tongues. They are surrounded by their families and friends who also speak their mother tongue. They do not really feel or see the need to learn the language of the country they are living in.

7.4 Language courses in football academies

There is no doubt that foreign academy players need English lessons. English is absolutely relevant for them because otherwise they would not be able to follow their dreams of becoming professional football players. They all know this and when asked, also answer that they are very willing to learn. The actual situation may be slightly different. They all try to give their best during training sessions and matches and sometimes they are not able to concentrate fully during their English lessons. There can be – as in any field – a lot of improvements in the

organisation of the English course but at the end of the day, it is up to the boys to which extent they embrace the opportunity of learning the language. The target language learner group across football academies is, despite their common goal to be a successful player in the first team, in itself very heterogeneous. Players come from different countries with different mother tongues, have a different motivation for learning English, different learning and teaching backgrounds, different social backgrounds and different learning abilities. Some of the players are not even alphabetised.

As in any language course, the main goal for academy players is to develop and improve their language skills. This is done through the teaching of grammar and vocabulary as well as the development of the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) in the foreign language. Apart from the pure language skills learners need to get to know the peculiarities of the English culture. Most of the academy players live with host parents where they encounter many cultural differences. Furthermore, the learners should be made familiar with the most important football terms in order to know how to behave and what to do on and off the pitch. This also helps them to integrate into the team as fast as possible and to be successful as a player. Equally important to equipping them with the language skills they need on the pitch and within the football life is to give the young players a sound education on which they can fall back in case their football career does not work out as planned.

Contrary to senior players, academy players have to attend English courses. It is compulsory and in the best interest of everybody involved, that the young boys learn the language of their new home as quickly as possible. The language courses are organised by the football academy. On average they have 2-3 lessons per week. Many of them have attended school in their home country so they are used to a certain amount of teaching. They are also motivated to learn because they do not have any family members living with them. Therefore they are forced to communicate with native English speakers. There are, as mentioned earlier, significant differences in the learning behaviour of adult and

adolescent learners. The concept of only very limited progress and a minimum of grammar and vocabulary as was proposed by Wiemann (2003) in his “Deutsch für Ballkünstler” cannot necessarily be applied to academy players. As they spend a lot more time on English courses than senior players they can also make a lot more progress. Even though some of them are not literate and others have a very limited pedagogical background, there are also quite a number of young players who come directly from schools in their home countries. Sometimes they already have a very good knowledge of English and in other cases they are used to learning.

All boys get homework in their courses but it is a lot different than in school. The tutors have to be lenient about it and just let them redo the exercise. One language tutor lets the language learners write a letter of apology in case they have forgotten to do their homework. In general, most of the learning has to take place within the language course as the foreign players rarely spend a lot of time at home learning English. They mostly deal with English in between training sessions or when they do not have anything else to do.

The levels of the courses follow the traditional distinctions between beginners, intermediate and advanced. In traditional English courses it is necessary to describe the “entry and exit level“ (Richards 2001:146) of the students. In football clubs, too, it is very important to define the entry level of each player. When it comes to the exit level, the situation is a bit different. Players normally remain at football academies until they are 18. In senior teams the players have contracts but if they have an attractive offer from a different club they may terminate their contract earlier than originally negotiated. It is therefore quite impossible to define an exact exit level for a player.

As there are no specific materials, language tutors at football clubs use traditional General English course books. Additionally, many of them have assembled teaching resources on their own. These consist of simplified grammar explanations, newspaper articles, game reviews, games and word lists. All language tutors are free to choose what to teach. There exists neither an official

curriculum nor a syllabus that states what foreign football players need to learn. The language tutors often work closely together with the education and welfare officer of the academy. In some academies the physiotherapist or the nutritionist approaches the language tutor with certain teaching requests.

The aim of the language course is that the foreign boys learn to speak and understand English as quickly as possible. For them it is a great help if academy staff speak their language. The boys can turn to them in case of emergencies or problems. But as coaches and academy staff frequently speak many languages and communicate with the foreign players in their mother tongues, these players do not improve their English because they do not see the need to use it for communicative purposes.

Many members of staff at football academies told me that they are amazed by how quickly the younger players (15/16-18 years of age) learn to speak English. All of them were exposed to natural learning (in families, among colleagues, etc.) and formal instruction (in English courses). This duality of learning the language appears to be a successful model for academy players. Most senior players (beyond 18 years) are not so concerned about their learning the language and maybe assume that they will “pick it up” while they are exposed to it. What cannot be neglected, however, is the function of formal instruction. Many studies were undertaken (c.f. Ellis 2000) which tried to demonstrate whether formal instruction works. The results of these studies are threefold: (1) instructed learners seem to outperform naturalistic learners (2) instruction aids the acquisition of useful formulas and (3) through instruction new linguistic rules can be acquired and existing knowledge can be controlled. Long (1983:359) asks whether instruction makes a difference at all. He presents several studies that yielded mixed and not so clear-cut results. However, they all point in the direction that “instruction is good for you. Regardless of your proficiency level, of the wider linguistic environment in which you receive it, and of the type of test you are going to perform on” (Long 1983:379). Long’s review has often been cited to demonstrate the positive effect of formal instruction on language learning. Ellis

(2000:133) has similar arguments and states that learners need formal instruction as well as informal language use. “Formal instruction may work best when there are also opportunities for informal language use”. Academy players have the great advantage of living in the country of the target language and being exposed to this “informal language use”. In this way they have a good chance to learn English quickly. But simply living in England is not enough in order to learn to interact in the language. In addition to being exposed to the language, the young football players also need to attend language courses in which they receive formal instruction.

7.4.1 Goals and objectives of a language course for academy players

The main objectives of a football course for academy players is to be able to talk to and understand the fellow players, the coaches and all academy staff as well as the analysis of the football performance which is done via a specific software and discussed with the coaches. Furthermore, every player needs to understand the football language specific for his position. Every position on the field requires different vocabulary which is necessary in order for the players to function as a team. It is especially important for the young players to become familiar with English humour, banter and sarcasm. These particular aspects of English culture are very hard to teach but the boys are confronted with them every day. If they do not understand this language, they run the risk of becoming an outsider in the team. Another objective is to teach them the aspects of and differences between colloquial and formal language. With their teammates they usually use colloquial language but with their coaches and people outside the football club, the foreign players should be able to use polite formal language.

Among others, the following language functions help the players to communicate in English. They are important on and off the pitch:

- asking questions
- talking to and understanding the coaches, the education and welfare officer and the physiotherapist
- opening and closing a telephone conversation

- interrupting people politely
- giving your opinion
- greeting people
- asking for clarification
- saying that you have not understood
- asking for a second explanation
- getting advice
- making arrangements
- discussing problems with academy staff and the host family

7.4.2 Topics

When designing a language course for foreign football players, it is essential to know which topics to cover in order to keep the learners motivated. As could be seen from the study, football terms including body parts, injuries and training tools are very important. Furthermore, the players need to understand what they hear about food and nutrition. For any sportsperson, it is essential to know how to keep the body in best shape. Nutrition is an important issue in every academy and there is specialised vocabulary involved which the foreign players need to understand.

Football players do not spend all their time on the pitch and therefore have a need for general topics of every-day life as well. All of them need to open a bank account, withdraw money, convert money or even transfer money. Even though in most academies the education and welfare officer, together with a representative of a bank, helps and advises the boys, they need to understand what is being said. Another issue of interest for the academy players is passing their driving licence exam and buying a car. The ones who do not have a car need information and vocabulary about public transport: what kind of transport is available in the region, how to use public transport, how to read timetables, etc. Eating would be another topic of interest. There are quite a few cultural differences and so it is important for the players to know how to behave when eating out (how to order, how to indicate that you want to pay, etc.) but also when

eating at home with the host family (what are the eating habits of English families, how does one behave at the table, etc.). Shopping would be another topic which is interesting for the boys. Most of them already earn a substantial amount of money which occasionally they are eager to spend. According to Ur (1999:2), further topics which are of interest for the foreign players are listening to the news, weather forecast, sports reports and discussing problems with family and academy staff.

However, goals of language course topics should not be set in cement. Every boy is an individual personality with individual problems and needs. The above-mentioned functions and topics are of interest for every academy player but the list is not and cannot be comprehensive. It is the challenge of each language tutor to incorporate those additional functions and topics which are of immediate need to their particular language learners.

7.4.3 Application of second language learning theories

There are many theories and models that inform us how people learn a language other than their own, but there is no research around the question of how learning languages for specific purposes differs as opposed to general purposes. Until we have some answers, I believe the only option is to fall back on findings of general theories and models of learning a language other than the mother tongue. These SLA theories can, of course, only be the starting point for research into LSP and SLA. As LSP researchers state (e.g. Basturkmen 2002 or Swales 2000) more research around the question how students acquire LSP skills would be welcome.

As could be seen in chapter four, there is a plethora of theories of second language acquisition which all have different foci and come to different results. It is nevertheless possible to draw important conclusions for the teaching of English at football academies from them. Even though all the tutors who work for football academies are experienced teachers, it may be important for them to be aware of the findings of the theory of the field. Usually during teacher education, the main emphasis is on the practical side of teaching. Research findings, however,

can help solve certain problems that tutors as well as learners encounter during the teaching and learning process. It is important to keep in mind that theories on second language acquisition are nothing but theoretical possibilities created by human beings, and they are there to be challenged by new approaches. Language tutors should never make the mistake of thinking that their approach to teaching is the only legitimate one. They should always be aware that any theory or model has its advantages and disadvantages and might work for some learners and not for others. It is their challenge and responsibility to find the right model for individual learners.

Even though there are so many models and theories of SLA, it is possible to list five components that are essential in the field of second language learning. (1) There exists something called “learner language” which is an attempt of the learner to use the target language. It is an incomplete language system in a state of constant flux. It is variable, dynamic but also systematic. Learners internally formulate hypotheses about the target language and test these out in their learning contexts. This learner language is typically formulaic speech and characterised by structural and semantic simplification. The output of learners is very variable. Learners, especially at the beginning, use correct and incorrect forms alongside each other. Learner language can also fossilise which means that learners do not improve any more. Furthermore, it can happen that learners reach native-like competence only in some aspects of the L2. (2) While acquiring a second language, learners pass through many stages. Through the developmental stages learners make a lot of errors which are systematic. Through these errors it is possible for the teachers to measure the progress of their learners. This means that errors are nothing negative but necessary for the acquisition process. (3) It can happen that learners do not speak at all during the first phase of learning a second language. Such a phase is called the “silent phase”. Teachers should not pressure such learners to talk. They will start talking when they are ready. (4) It is often heard that children learn languages better and faster than adults. Research has not clearly supported this hypothesis. Even though there are cognitive differences between adults and children their

language learning development is very similar. (5) The mother tongue of a second language learner always plays a certain role. Any knowledge of a prior language influences second language learning. There is positive and negative transfer between the L1 and the L2 but in most cases the influence is most strongly with pronunciation than anything else. The first language only influences the order but not the sequence of development.

Ellis (1985:278-280) adds further essential components in the field of second language learning in the form of hypotheses.

- SLA follows a natural sequence of development, but there will be minor variations in the order of development and more major variations in the rate of development and in the level of proficiency achieved.
- Situational factors are indirect determinants of the rate of SLA and also of the level of proficiency achieved, but they do not influence the sequence of development, and affect the order of development only in minor and temporary ways. They are the primary causes of variability in language-learner language.
- Input that is interactionally adjusted as a result of the negotiation of meaning in two-way discourse between the learner and another speaker functions as a determinant of the sequence of development, the order of development, and the rate of development.
- Affective learner differences (relating to motivation and personality) determine the rate of SLA and the level of proficiency achieved, but not the sequence or order of development.
- Interlanguage development occurs as a product of the learner's use of procedural knowledge to construct discourse. Furthermore, interlanguage development occurs as the product of the learner's universal grammar, which makes some rules easier to learn than others.

Even though second language acquisition research does not have the aim of providing pedagogical guidelines for teachers, it still contributes greatly to improving language instruction. After all, the whole field started out with the goal

of improving pedagogical materials. Even though language teachers cannot all be experts in second language acquisition theories, they should be aware of the general characteristics of the learning process and of the language learners. Larsen-Freeman (1991:336-338) lists some of these characteristics:

The learning/acquisition process is complex. As has been seen, the question how people learn a second language cannot be answered easily. Teachers, therefore, must be prepared to account for all the multiple routes learners might take.

The process is gradual and nonlinear. Learners need time to master form-function relations and to tackle structures. Backsliding is very common even though teachers might think that particular forms have been mastered.

The process is dynamic. Cognitive strategies and factors affecting the learner change over time. Teachers must be flexible and react to the stages learners are currently experiencing.

Learners learn when they are ready to do so. Learners follow a certain stage of development so they will only learn according to their current stage of development.

Learners rely on the knowledge and experience they have. Learners form hypotheses on the basis of their L1, other languages they know or the TL. They test their hypotheses against their available input.

For most adult learners, complete mastery of the L2 may be impossible. Most adult learners do not reach native-like mastery of the L2. Some aspects of their IL will likely fossilise before their acquisition is complete. For nearly all learners there seems to be a critical period for pronunciation. Thus teachers should always motivate learners to reach a better standard of their L2 without forgetting to be realistic in their expectations.

There is tremendous individual variation among language learners. This is one of the biggest challenges for teachers. They need to take all these differences into account when they teach.

Learning a language is a social phenomenon. One might add that is also a cultural phenomenon as most learners attempt to acquire a second language in order to communicate with the members of the TL group but by doing so they inevitably come into contact with the target language culture.

The role of the ESP teacher is quite different from a General English teacher. The ESP teacher works within an institution or company and has to cater at least to the needs of the particular institution, the sponsors of the course and the students. More than in General English courses, he/she has to get a feeling for the particular needs of the learners. Courses are frequently restricted in time and money, so all actors involved want to see quick results. They are only possible if the teacher knows exactly what the students already know and exactly what they need English in their workplace for. Furthermore, the ESP teacher in most cases is also the materials writer, the syllabus designer, the analyst etc. ESP teachers in most cases do not work alone.

7.4.4 Skills to be taught in language courses for football players

As there is no official syllabus for language courses for football players, there are no recommendations what specific skills and competencies should be taught. It is, for example, up to the teacher to decide whether he/she includes explicit teaching of pronunciation or culture. Many tutors are convinced that they teach all necessary skills and competencies but they have no official benchmark which they can follow. What has become obvious is that all tutors try to teach speaking and listening skills first and foremost. Reading and writing is taught far less. No teacher reported that he/she explicitly teaches pronunciation. Even though the foreign boys are surrounded by English the whole day, it would make sense to give them a feeling for the correlation between a sound and its visual representation. Academy language tutors in most cases just repeat words that are wrongly pronounced without dedicating part of the lessons to it. This would

be important insofar as certain sounds do not exist in various languages and foreign players might have great difficulties pronouncing them.

The language barrier is not the same for all players. Some languages already use many English terms to describe the game of football. Other players do not only need to learn all the football terms but also aspects outside the football pitch. All four skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking) should be taught, even though speaking and listening are most important for the players. Skills cannot be seen in isolation – one skill can support the learning of another. The detailed theories of teaching and learning the four skills as well as the teaching and learning of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar are vast fields. They would be extensive papers in themselves. Therefore, I can only touch briefly upon them here as they are merely one piece of the puzzle of language learning at football academies.

7.4.4.1 Reading

Reading in the foreign language is not considered one of the most important skills for football players. They should be able to talk to and understand their colleagues but during a normal football day, a player does not encounter many situations in which he needs to read. In the past, reading was often considered a rather passive skill. This view has changed dramatically over time. Nowadays, reading is also seen as a way of improving the communicative competence of the language learner. Reading texts were often used to teach other skills, like pronunciation, vocabulary or structure. In a lesson that is specifically dedicated to reading, we should not teach language but use texts that really entertain and motivate the students. Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006:268) state that when reading a text, one has to activate linguistic, pragmatic, intercultural and strategic competencies in order to understand the meaning of the text. All these competencies contribute to the acquisition of an overall communicative ability.

When reading a text in class teachers should – similar to the skill of listening – introduce pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading questions in order for the learners to know what piece of information to concentrate on. Furthermore, it is

important to teach specific reading skills that also occur in real-life situations. Nuttall (1996:4) states, that “reading has one overriding purpose: to get meaning from a text”. This is especially the case in real-life situations. In real life we seldom read a text in which every single paragraph is of equal importance to us. Sometimes we read the whole text, or we just look for the information we need, we look for certain words or phrases that are important to us or on other occasions we choose not to read certain paragraphs at all. Grabe and Stoller (2004:13) identify the following seven purposes for reading:

1. Reading to search for simple information
2. Reading to skim quickly
3. Reading to learn from texts
4. Reading to integrate information
5. Reading to write (or search for information needed for writing)
6. Reading to critique texts
7. Reading for general comprehension

The main problem for foreign readers lies in the fact that their vocabulary is far smaller than that of the author of the text. As soon as a foreign reader tries to decode the meaning of a certain text he becomes an active part or the reading process. This clearly disproves the former assumption that reading is only a passive skill. Furthermore, reading is interaction as the reader and the writer depend on one another and the reader assumes that (Nuttall 1996:11) he and the writer are using the same language, that the writer has a message and that the writer wants the reader to understand the message.

Whenever possible, reading activities should be similar to real-life reading situations. It is clear that, on some occasions, teachers want to use reading texts to highlight specific grammatical constructions or certain phrases, but this use of texts should not be the predominant one. If someone decides to read – not matter what text – the meaning is always at the heart of the activity.

Real-life reading situations for a football player may include reading the schedule of public transport, getting some information from the Internet, ordering food from the local fast-food delivery, reading information about the new environment in a guidebook or the tourist information site or being able to read the local newspaper. If the player has children the reading situation may change significantly. His offspring will receive a lot of information from school which has to be signed by the parents, or the child may receive verbal grading, etc.

Fluency in reading, whether in L1 or L2, takes time to develop. It first and foremost requires acquiring knowledge of the new language elements – especially vocabulary, grammar and discourse structure (Saville-Toike 2006:156). Research has shown that L2 reading comprehension can be improved if reading strategies are taught explicitly. There are different strategies which improve L2 reading comprehension, depending heavily on the purpose of reading. If a reader only looks for specific information within a text, he/she can scan the text for this piece of information. If reading for gist is what he/she needs, then the skill of skimming is more important. Reading comprehension and reading speed are connected. It has been found that good readers do not read word for word but divide a text into units of meaning that consist of several words. (Nuttall 1996:55). Ediger (2006:316-318) gives various recommendations for teachers that contribute to effective reading:

- focus on establishing a purpose for reading
- extend over time
- be different for different learners
- focus on helping students understand when and where to use strategies
- teach students to monitor how they are doing in their strategy use
- include specific information about the benefits of the strategies being taught
- collect a variety of materials in different genres around a single topic
- explore or develop collections of news articles on a single subject

One of the most important reading skills is to decide which unknown words are important for understanding the text. Learners need to learn when to ignore difficult words. This process takes time and the skill can only be learnt through reading practice. Words are considered difficult when they are, for example, idioms, have several meaning, are highly technical or are ironic.

7.4.4.2 Writing

Like reading, writing has undergone tremendous changes over the years. Nowadays, it is not considered as secondary to speaking but as a dynamic and creative way to further enhance the communicative competence of the L2 learner. For a football player, writing is not the most important skill. In his everyday life, he seldom finds himself in situations where he needs to write something – at least, not long texts. For a L2 learner, writing occupies a supportive role in the whole teaching process. Whenever the learners are asked to perform reading or listening tasks, it is often necessary for them to write something down.

7.4.4.3 Listening

Most football players have problems with the speed of natural spoken English. In other words, they have problems listening to and understanding what is spoken. Underwood (1997:1) defines listening as “the activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear”. It is considered to be the most difficult skill to learn as it involves a variety of sources such as phonetic, phonological, prosodic, lexical, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic. (Martínez-Flor, Usó-Juan 2006:29). It is clear that in order for learners to be able to understand a spoken text, they have to be familiar with the grammar, the phonology and the vocabulary of the foreign language. In addition to these prerequisites, it is necessary to teach them how to strategically listen to someone. For example, it does not make sense to think about one word or one phrase that the student has not understood. During the time he tries to make sense of it, he/she will have missed the rest of the talk.

Rixon (1996:38) defines four main sources of listening difficulty:

- the weak relationship between English sounds and the way they are spelt in the written language
- changes in sounds when they occur in rapid, connected speech
- the rhythm pattern of English speech
- different ways of pronouncing the “same” sound

Listening is always an active process which encompasses different phases. The sounds need to enter our aural system, then be processed and, at a later stage, the listener constructs a meaning from them. In order to construct a meaning, a listener always needs a context while he/she processes the sounds. All these processes happen within a very short time-span; therefore, comprehension is even more difficult for foreigners. So when we teach listening, we want the students to attend to what they hear, to process it, to understand it, to interpret it, to evaluate it and to respond to it (Underwood 1997:4).

Foreign listeners to English conversations are faced with different challenges. English has vowel sounds and consonant clusters that might not exist in the mother tongue of the listener. Additionally, the rhythm, intonation and stress of the language differ greatly from other languages. The speech itself might be organised in a different way, too. What is more, as in other languages, the spoken language is very different from the written one. Listeners also need to recognise transition words, predict what the speaker will say next and identify what the speaker *really* means. A L2 learner needs fewer words to understand spoken English than written English. Sometimes learners understand written English but have problems listening.

Saville-Troike (2006:161) states that beginning L2 learners can start to create sense from auditory input most easily if they know in advance what the speaker is going to be talking about, if key words and phrases are learnt as recognition vocabulary elements before they are encountered in connected speech, if speakers pause frequently at boundaries between parts of sentences, if auditory

messages are supported by visual images (including writing) and if the communicative situation is a reciprocal one that allows the listener to seek repetition and clarification, or to ask the speaker to slow down.

In the past, people sometimes argued that it is not possible to teach listening. Even though we do not know exactly what happens in a learner's brain when he/she tries to listen, we can help him/her to understand spoken language better. Underwood (1997:22) states that students will become more proficient listeners to English if:

- they apply the strategies they use naturally in mother-tongue listening and not try to listen to every single word
- they increase their knowledge of the cultural context in which the language is being spoken
- they accept that partial interpretation of what they hear is often sufficient for understanding.

Listening at the beginning of the communicative teaching approach – due to technical limitations – meant listening to cassettes. Nowadays teachers use CDs and also try to teach listening by watching a dialogue on video or DVD. This has the advantage that learners also see the context as well as people's gestures and this makes listening easier for them. When teaching listening, the tutor should make sure to include different phases. There should be a pre-listening phase in which the teacher clearly explains to the learners what is awaiting them. The context is established, motivation for listening is created and only critical vocabulary is explained. Furthermore, students should be asked to complete different pre-listening activities such as looking at pictures, reading a text, getting familiar with the questions to be answered during listening, etc. While listening, the students should also complete certain activities which can range from marking items in pictures, putting pictures in order, to completing grids and the more traditional true-false, gap-filling and multiple-choice exercises. Such exercises are necessary as a self-evaluation for the students. Without them they may think that they have understood everything but in reality they have probably

missed important points of the conversation. What is most important between the first and the second listening is to present questions. Only thus do the listeners know what they are listening for. The listening activity often serves as the starting point for discussions and talks within the classroom. Post-listening activities are important to sum up the topic and give the students the chance to participate in the whole process. Up to this point they were only the silent listeners but after the listening activity they know a lot about the topic and can state their own opinions. In the past, listening activities were used to reinforce recently taught grammar. But as Field (2008:16) notes, “in the end, lessons often focused more on discussing the language of the recording than on practising listening.”

What is important, though, is the separation of the spoken and the written word. Students should get a transcript of the listening activity at the end of the lesson in order to recognise the words that have been spoken. What has been recognised in recent years is the problem of checking understanding through comprehension questions. A lot of reading and writing is involved in such exercises and the teacher cannot tell whether the student did not understand the listening text or simply could not read correctly. The solution to this problem is task-based activities, such as completing grids or filling in forms.

There has been a long discussion going on whether recorded material should be authentic or non-authentic. Non-authentic material has the disadvantage of leading the students to false expectations about “real” speech whereas authentic material presents language that is really spoken by native people. It has often been argued that authentic materials are too difficult for young learners or learners who have just started learning the language. The counter argument is that authentic materials can be used at any stage of learning if the tasks are matched accordingly. Field (2008:284) even states that “it is clear that true authenticity cannot be achieved in the language classroom – and perhaps least of all in the listening classroom.” But for him, the value of authentic recordings lies in the fact that they represent a form of speech that is different from purpose-designed materials and that they provide the learners with a listening experience

that is similar to real life in that parts of the input will not be understood by the listener. Different studies (c.f. Long 1996 in Bell 2006:2) show that native speakers normally adjust their speech when talking to non-native speakers. They use syntactic and lexical simplifications, shorter sentences, a restricted range of vocabulary and speak at a slower range than they would to a native speaker. The respondents in my interviews, however, did not get this impression.

If they were allowed to, language tutors at football clubs would have the unique possibility to record authentic speech of coaches, physiotherapists, education and welfare officers, house parents, etc. and to deal with these texts in class. Even though football players are exposed to this natural speech nearly the whole day long, many of them do not understand everything that is said. Together with the language tutor the player could analyse and understand the recording and be more confident in future. Even though such recordings would be authentic, it still remains the fact that the listening situation is not really authentic as the learners cannot ask the speaker to repeat his utterances or to see gestures or facial expressions that in real life can facilitate understanding enormously.

7.4.4.4 Speaking

As listening almost always occurs in conversation, students need to be able to speak too. They will alternately be listener and speaker. Therefore teaching listening is closely related to teaching speaking. In real-life situations listening does not occur without speaking. Normally, people are engaged in a dialogue in which they alternately take on the role of the listener and the speaker. It is the main goal of teaching to prepare learners to use the language in real-speech. In order to be able to say something in a foreign language, one needs to have knowledge of the grammar and the verbs but there is a difference between knowledge of a language (grammar and vocabulary) and use of a language (making rapid decisions, implementing them, adjusting the conversation to unexpected problems). Learners may theoretically know a lot about a language but are not able to use it in speech. Whereas knowledge can be understood and

memorised, only a skill can be imitated and practiced. Therefore, these two different areas require different pedagogic actions.

There is also a huge difference between written and spoken language concerning the size and shape of sentences or the time constraints in expressing oneself. Like with the listening skill, the speaker needs to possess pragmatic knowledge in order to understand and make him/herself understood. In contrast to writing, speakers have very little time to plan, organise and execute their message. Therefore, speakers facilitate and compensate when speaking. Bygate (1997:15) lists four ways of facilitation: simplifying (speakers use less complex syntax), ellipsis (abbreviation of messages and incomplete sentences or clauses), use of formulaic expressions and use of fillers and hesitation devices.

As when correcting written texts, speakers also often have to use alterations. Speakers correct themselves and rephrase or reformulate what they say. These strategies help to reduce memory capacity and to reduce the pre-planning of speech. It is essential that teachers are aware of the facilitation and compensation strategies that occur in natural speech. It is not necessary for the learners to always answer in full sentences or to carefully plan what they want to say.

When people are having a conversation, it is very important that there is mutual understanding. A speaker always wants to know whether the listener has understood. This is one of the most important elements in talks between coaches and players. Coaches do not always explain things and expect the players to execute them. In many cases, the coaches expect reactions from the players. If a foreign player does not react immediately or inappropriately, it does not necessarily mean that he has not understood but that he does not know how to answer. Teachers need to equip their learners with the most basic answering or reacting techniques.

When it comes to teaching speaking, there are at least two different positions. One states that there has to be progressive development. Only after the learners

have mastered the grammar, phonology and lexicon of a language can they start to speak. The other position believes that there should be immediate communication. Learners should start using the language from the first possible contact with it.

7.4.4.5 Vocabulary

One of the central aspects of language courses is teaching new words and phrases. As we do not only teach isolated, single words, it is better to speak of vocabulary "items" rather than "words". It does not suffice to just present the learners new vocabulary items. The following aspects need to be taken into account (Ur 2007:60pp): pronunciation and spelling (what does a particular word sound and look like), grammar (does the item change its form in certain grammatical contexts or does it connect with other words in sentences), collocation (which combination of words can be used in a specific context), aspects of meaning (what denotation or connotation does the word have and when is it appropriately applied in real speech), meaning relationships (how does the meaning of one item relate to the meaning of others) and word formation (what are the components of words and how can words be combined).

Without knowledge of vocabulary, no learner of a second language will be able to read, to write, to understand or to speak. Knowledge of vocabulary influences the mastery of all four skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking. Research in the area of vocabulary learning started in the 1930s with Ogden and Richard's word list of basic English. They assembled a list of 850 words that should allow L2 beginners to get their meaning across in English. In 1953, West published his General Service List. His and following work concentrated on a) the frequency of each word in written English and b) the relative prominences of various meanings and uses of a word form. Even though throughout the period between 1945 and 1970, vocabulary learning and teaching was not seen as one of the primary goals of L2 acquisition, it is now undisputable that it has a fixed place in any teaching and learning process. Many learners experience that their problems in receptive and productive language use result from inadequate vocabulary knowledge.

As with language learning theories, researchers do not agree about how people learn vocabulary. Different researchers have also had a different focus on vocabulary learning strategies. Thus, there exist many factors in the literature which influence vocabulary acquisition. Among them are (Takač 2008):

- linguistic features of lexical items: how is a word defined
- the influence of first and other languages: what is the degree of equivalency between languages
- the role of memory: what role does memory play in the vocabulary acquisition process
- the organisation and development of the second language mental lexicon: how do people store new words
- individual learner differences: what learning strategies do certain learners apply
- exposure to linguistic input: do the learners have enough linguistic input in order to be able to acquire new words
- the role of the teacher and vocabulary teaching strategies: what do teachers do to help their learners learn
- the role of vocabulary learning strategies: how much effort do the learners invest to learn new vocabulary

Vocabulary learning can take place in a direct or an indirect form. Direct vocabulary learning exercises include, for example (Nation 1990:2), word-building exercises, guessing words from context, learning words in lists or vocabulary games. When learning vocabulary indirectly (Krashen's input theory), the attention of the learner is focused on the message of a speaker or writer.

Knowledge of a word encompasses receptive and productive knowledge. Receptive knowledge means to recognise the sound of a word and what it looks like. This involves the form, the position, the function the meaning and associations of a word. Productive knowledge goes even further. To produce a word, a learner needs to know how to pronounce it, how to spell and write it and

to use its grammatically correct form. Usually the receptive vocabulary of a person is much larger than the productive one.

7.4.4.6 Grammar

The place of grammar within the teaching process has altered quite a few times over the centuries, from being at the heart of teaching to playing just a minor role. It cannot be denied that it is important to know how words can be combined in sentences when we want to be able to speak a new language. Traditionally, grammar books break down the language into its different systems. Students are then required to learn these systems. Most learners are not very keen on learning grammar explicitly. They find some of the exercises very difficult and boring.

Grammar has traditionally been the centre of every curriculum. Teachers were of the opinion that a language consists mainly of grammar and without it a foreign language could not be learnt. This view has changed in the last years. The teaching of grammar and language learning theories are strongly interconnected. Some theories state that languages are learnt through deliberate study, whereas others view language learning as the subconscious absorption or the target language. Stern (1992:128) is of the opinion that no single view but a combination of the two should be applied in a teaching programme. Grammar used to be taught as segmented items. Students learnt how to form the Present Perfect Tense or when and how to use the Gerund. An alternative way of teaching language and its grammar is through topics, situations, notions and functions. Larger segments of language can be introduced through a specific topic or situations. These topics or situations are then embedded into a communicative event and are more difficult to convey than traditional grammatical structures. Students are confronted with a whole discourse using often long and complicated language constructs. The advantage is that the students become familiar with a relevant communicative event instead of isolated language chunks.

When it comes to football players, it does not make sense to present grammar in order to explain certain phenomena of the language. I do not think that it makes sense to follow the radical view and leave grammar out as much as possible. Football players are used to a particular way of learning when it comes to their football skills. They listen to the coach who explains a certain exercise. Usually the exercise is demonstrated either by the coach or a player and then everybody tries it out and receives feedback from the coach. English language teaching can work for them can work in a similar way. The coach is replaced by the language tutor. The tutor now is the one who presents a certain language feature and explains its peculiarities. I believe that football players need explanations and demonstration in order to follow their usual method of acquiring knowledge or skills. Considering their possible lack of general language knowledge, these grammatical explanations can be simpler than in traditional English courses but they should always be embedded in meaningful context. Stern (1992:145) notes that “learners need practice not only in contextualizing but also in decontextualising, that is, they need to be able to abstract a formal element from its context”. Therefore, there is nothing intrinsically bad in presenting a grammatical feature in isolation in order for the learners to recognise exactly what exactly they have to deal with. What every tutor should bear in mind is that grammar is not an end in itself but functions as a bridge towards successful communication.

Most football players do not like learning grammar. They want to be able to speak and to understand as soon as possible and do not see the necessity of grammar learning. One solution to that problem was proposed by Wiemann (2003:149) who introduced the concept of a “Sprintgrammatik”. This means that in learning materials for players, the grammar should be kept to a minimum and per chapter only a limited number of new words be introduced. But as previously stated, such a shortened grammar would not necessarily be applicable to all academy players as some of them are used to learning and do not need texts dramatically shortened.

7.4.4.7 Pronunciation

Learning a new language does not only mean mastering the vocabulary and the grammar, but among others, the sound system as well. Footballers who live in England might get a certain “feeling” for the language just by being surrounded by it. Pronunciation is a vast field that consists of speech sounds, rules that connect these sounds, word- and sentence stress, rhythm and intonation. Given these many elements, it makes sense to explicitly teach them. For different nationalities various sounds and stress patterns are problematic because they do not exist or are very different in their mother tongues. If pronunciation is not good in a foreign language, it can even hinder communication.

Hewings (2009:3) notes that in British English around 44 phonemes (20 vowels and 24 consonants) are generally recognised, but different languages use different ones. Many of the pronunciation problems faced by learners of English relate to differences in the phonemes used in the first and second language. Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that English distinguishes between vowel and consonant letters and vowel and consonant sounds. Other features of English that can cause pronunciation problems are (Hewings 2009:3-10): consonant clusters (it is not very common in major languages to have, as in English, more than two consonant clusters), stress shift (depending on the context the stress of a word may change), connected speech (due to the speed of speaking, pronunciation changes take place in connected speech, e.g. sounds change, are missed out or extra sounds are inserted), strong and weak forms (many words in English have a strong and a weak form which is not the case for other languages) and pronunciation and spelling (learners of English will be confused as the relationship between spelling and pronunciation is quite complex).

Phonology, like so many areas of language teaching and learning, is quite a controversial area. According to Ur (2007:47), pronunciation includes the sound of the language (phonology), stress and rhythm and intonation. It is helpful for the students to know the phonetic representations of the sounds. Some teachers put

too much and others too little emphasis on pronunciation but as there is no convincing empirical evidence which points to one position, the truth may lie somewhere between the extremes. Putting too much emphasis on pronunciation and intonation can lead to the inhibition of grammar learning, whereas too little emphasis can lead to a lack of communicative competence. In any case, Stern (1992:116) notes that "the value of pronunciation for learning the language is pervasive, and the teaching of pronunciation under any circumstances cannot be regarded as a luxury one can easily dispense with…….Pronunciation is never unimportant, although the level of accuracy of pronunciation as an objective may well vary considerably for different types of courses".

Even though it will be too much to have football players transcribe words, it is helpful for them to get an idea how the phonetic alphabet works. This helps them when they learn on their own and need to look up words in a dictionary. Additionally, it makes sense to introduce a system of indicating word stress. Intonation, on the other hand, is something that has to be taught in class as it would go too far to spend too much time on rhythm or intonation. Foreign football players have the advantage that they live in the country where the target language is spoken so they are surrounded by word stress, rhythm and intonation and can pick it up without too much instruction. But as these learners are not targeted on learning speaking Received Pronunciation or follow academic courses, it is more important that they make themselves understood among their fellow players. Pronunciation teaching is important in cases where misunderstandings might occur. When the players, for example, just speak with a heavy accent but are understood, pronunciation and intonation adjustments are not really important.

7.4.4.8 Pragmatics

In addition to cultural knowledge, the learner also needs to have pragmatic competence in order to successfully listen to a talk. Pragmatics is concerned with the socio-cultural aspects of learning a language and closely related to grammar: how to find the right words when wanting to apologise, make requests or be

polite in a foreign language? Pragmatics is part of theories of second language acquisition and a subfield of the construct of communicative competence. Pragmatics is not concerned with the formal aspects of language but with the question of how learners apply formal aspects of the L2 in actual communication. Little is yet known about how learners acquire rules of speaking. From the studies that have been conducted so far, three factors emerge which are important in the acquisition of pragmatic competence (Ellis 2008:197): (1) the level of the learner's linguistic competence (how well do learners need to have acquired the formal aspects of the L2 in order to perform pragmatic competence?) (2) transfer (how many rules of speaking do learners transfer from their L1 to the L2?) and (3) the status of the learner (what status does the learner have in relation to the communication partner?).

Thomas (1995:23) presents a view of pragmatics as "meaning in interaction". This view takes account of the various contributions of the speaker and the hearer as well as of utterance and context. She starts her explanation of pragmatics with the sentence (1995:1), "People do not always or even usually say what they mean." It is the difficulty for the foreign speaker to understand the words that are spoken and interpret them in the right way. Crystal, Kasper and Rose (2001:2) define pragmatics as, "the study of communicative action in its socio-cultural context". Pragmatics is concerned with questions such as: which strategies learners use for communication, how they effectively use langue and the social perceptions underlying communicative action. It is not easy for L2 learners to find the right words when wanting to apologise, make requests or be polite. Kasper and Rose (2002:1) state that whereas there is a large body of research in the area of second language pragmatic use, there is only scarce literature around the development of second language pragmatics.

There are many linguistic ways in which native speakers realise the appropriate speech acts but is it also possible for language learners to grasp the occasionally very subtle differences between the semantic options? When it comes to language courses, the question arises whether it is possible to teach pragmatics.

Is it possible, as Bardovi-Harlig (2001:13) puts it, to teach the “secret rules” of a language? Native speakers and non-native speakers of a language most often differ in their use of speech acts. According to Bardovi-Harlig (2001), the difference lies in the choice of speech acts (different speech acts or no speech acts at all), in the choice of semantic formulas (the type of information given), in content (the specific information given by a speaker) and in form of a speech act. The explanation for pragmatic differences between native speakers and non-native speakers are: availability of input, influence of instruction, proficiency, length of exposure and influence of first language and culture. In their study of instruction and feedback in the development of pragmatic competence, Koike and Pearson (2005) come to the conclusion that learners develop pragmatic competence more effectively when they experience instruction in the speech act and responses before doing exercises. There is, however, a difference of effect according to the type of task and the explicitness of instruction and feedback. They found that explicit instruction and feedback help learners understand pragmatic elements and contexts by calling their attention to pragmatic form. There are studies (e.g. Bouton 1994) that indicate that learners who receive pragmatic instructions are better than learners who do not. Bouton (1994:397) points out that learners can acquire some, perhaps many, features of pragmatics without instruction when they live in an environment which affords ample opportunity for exposure to and use of the target language. This means that “instruction is not *necessary* for each and every pragmatic learning object in the sense that it *cannot* be learnt without instruction.”

When it comes to learning pragmatics, academy players have an advantage over other foreign language learners. They are constantly surrounded by the target language and, as Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan (2006:51) put it, “become involved in situations where they are required to interpret utterances in context or interact with a variety of participants in different environments”. But even when exposed to the target language, specific pragmatic aspects are still incomplete so it makes sense to explicitly teach them.

7.5 The language tutor

All football academies that employ foreign players usually offer language courses. Football clubs normally recruit their language tutors through language centres and local language establishments. The language tutors I met at the academies all spoke at least one foreign language. Most of them, but not all, have a language teaching background and are open people who have lived abroad themselves for a certain period of time. Thus, they can appreciate better what it means to leave your home country and organise life somewhere else. Language tutors need to be very secretive. They are not permitted to talk about details of the club or the academy. This is especially delicate with foreign senior players who are very famous and prone to be the object of the media. It needs a great deal in the way of trust for the clubs to employ tutors who must keep secret what they might see or hear.

It is not necessary to be an expert on football in order to teach academy boys, but most language tutors have a sound knowledge of the game. This helps them to gain the trust of the boys. It always creates a positive atmosphere between teachers and learners if both groups can talk about the same topics with the same enthusiasm. The fundamental question always raised with ESP is whether the teacher needs to understand the subject matter of the ESP materials. In order to give an answer to this question, Hutchinson and Waters (1987:161) advise asking the following questions:

- Does the content of ESP materials need to be highly specialised?

It does not make sense for a teacher to use materials that he/she does not really understand. The teaching/learning situation will be a very complicated one for everyone involved. It is therefore better for the teacher to use suitable texts which take account of his/her competence. As most ESP teachers are material writers they can influence the choice of text.

- Why do so many ESP teachers find it difficult to comprehend ESP subject matter?

Hutchinson and Waters (1987:162-163) see a few problems. English language teachers do not have the chance to get an understanding of the teaching of specialised subjects or vocabulary during their education. When teachers are not confident in “foreign” subject matters they will not become good teachers of it.

- What kind of knowledge is required of the ESP teacher?

It is not really the subject knowledge that matters, but a positive attitude towards ESP, fundamental knowledge of the subject area to teach and an awareness that teachers probably already know a lot about the subject area without being aware of it. For the teaching process, it is necessary that the tutor has a basic knowledge of the subject matter and a willingness to enhance this knowledge by asking the students questions and consciously picking up knowledge through the process of teaching the materials. Robinson (1991:79) acknowledges that there is not one single model of ESP. Globally, many different ESP courses are organised, and for each, the teacher needs to have different qualities and requirements.

The language tutor in football academies needs to be much more than someone who teaches English. Even though clubs are of the opinion that a language tutor does not need to be a football expert, most of the boys I interviewed appreciated it when their tutor had a solid knowledge of the game. I am of the opinion that it is essential that the English lessons combine General English with Football English. Even though the boys hear and learn football terms on the pitch during every training and match, they often do not know the exact meaning of what they hear. It is therefore important from a linguistic point of view to explain football words and phrases to them.

When it comes to the language needs of academy players, opinions differ sometimes significantly between the players and the language tutors and education and welfare officers. One goalkeeper, for example, told me that he does not need to communicate more than other players on the field. His coach, however, said that it is required that he talked a lot on the pitch. The perception

concerning culture in the language course also differed a lot. Whereas, one language tutor told me that she teaches football terms, one of her students said that they hardly ever learn football terms. It is therefore essential for the course planner to get the opinions of all parties involved. A coach can best describe what the football players need to know in order to understand his commands and to understand his feedback. The physiotherapist knows best what a player linguistically requires in order to report medical problems. The player knows best in what linguistic areas he has problems even though he might not be able to use the appropriate meta-language to describe what he means. If language tutors are the ones designing the course and its materials, they need the input of everyone involved in order to best cater for the needs of the football players. It is important that the tutor not only knows the educational side but also the social environment of the learners. There is no question that teaching football players in a football academy is a very special situation for any tutor. Only when he/she takes into account this special situation (e.g. the players are tired because they have just had a hard training session, the players have their thoughts at the last victory or defeat and can therefore not really concentrate on the lesson, etc.) will a language course at an academy be a success.

It is essential to have good tutors who can motivate the players for the language course. The language tutor always has to find ways to make teaching for the boys as interesting as possible. The boys are at the academy to become excellent football players. Learning English is not very high on their agenda. They really work very hard during their days. Attending an English course after a long day of training is not their first priority. In football academies it can happen quite frequently that not all players are present for every language course. Many foreign players also play for their national teams and travel a lot. This makes it impossible for them to attend every single language lesson at the academy. Often, when the players come back, they have had a one- or two-week break between courses and very often have forgotten what they had learnt before, which makes it difficult for the language tutor to plan courses. Teaching young boys English skills, who are first and foremost interested in football, is a

challenge which is further complicated by the fact that they all come from different cultures, family backgrounds, educational backgrounds and social backgrounds.

The language tutor also needs to be someone who can explain to the young players certain social mechanisms that happen in communication. It is important for the foreign players to understand that they should not be disappointed when they do not understand jokes. They would need shared cultural knowledge which cannot really be taught but must be experienced while living in the country for an extended period of time. An element which has a social as well as a cultural connotation, are hand gestures. It would be advisable if the language tutor explained to the foreign players that hand gestures have different meanings in different cultures. Tutors should at least make their students aware of this fact to avoid misunderstandings.

Academy language tutors have a lot of responsibility. Even though in most cases they are in close contact with the education and welfare officer, they are the only ones who decide on the curriculum of the English course. They are the course planners as well as the material planners. No one really evaluates their teaching or the progress of the boys. Academy staff merely notice that the foreign boys are able to talk to them or their fellow players and make themselves understood a lot better than before. But there is no formal evaluation process within academies. Even though it does not matter for the academy whether they employ a male or a female tutor, one (male) tutor told me that it is an advantage to be male. Even though the presence of tutors is not allowed during training sessions or team talks, the necessity sometimes arises to help out with a linguistic problem in the locker room. For women it would not be possible to be present there. As the language tutors are not allowed to be present at training sessions or talks between coaches and players, they need to rely on the input of academy staff like the education and welfare officer, the nutritionist, the physiotherapist and the coaches concerning the topics to be covered in the course. Only one

academy considers bringing the tutor in on team meetings or on the pitch, but he is not allowed to attend training sessions.

7.6 Teaching methods and materials

The situation I found in English football clubs concerning teaching resources was very similar to the one Kellerman et al. (2005:205) reported from the Netherlands. The clubs use various resources, among them, commercially available course books, self-designed books/handouts or both. Due to the lack of specialist materials, language tutors have to fall back on traditional English textbooks. These books, as Wiemann (2003:144) notes, are targeted at immigrants and deal with topics that have only marginal relevance for football professionals. Many tutors, therefore, design their own materials which are tailor-made for their target group. As with most ESP courses, it is also necessary for tutors teaching football players to design and plan the course materials they use. They need to have a sound overview of existing teaching materials in order not to run the risk of "reinventing the wheel". For a lot of ESP aspects existing course materials, or at least part of them, can be used. For the domain specific vocabulary, new materials need to be developed. Most ESP courses try to use authentic materials. When it comes to materials for language courses in football clubs, there seem to be two categories of views: tutors who use traditional General English course books and some additional materials and tutors who do without any course book and design all the necessary materials themselves. In such cases they can be very creative as the example of one tutor has shown, who has the learners answer newspaper ads on the telephone.

As no official curriculum exists, every language tutor autonomously decides what and how to teach. All tutors agree that the teaching methods and organisation of the courses need to be very different from traditional language courses. The young players are first and foremost at the academy to improve their football skills and to become professional football players. Academic education is not so high on their priority list. What is more, they often have their language courses after exhaustive training sessions and thus cannot concentrate very well. It is a

huge challenge for the language tutors to motivate these players. They try to achieve that by using many games and quizzes. Football players are used to competing on the pitch and the language tutors want to take advantage of this character trait. Apart from motivating games and quizzes, most language tutors also use word lists. At the beginning the learners receive word lists with important football terms and at a later stage they have to learn vocabulary as in any General English course. The main focus, however, is often put on verbs as they are the essential building blocks of sentences and largely contribute to a better understanding of the language.

All language tutors discuss the matches of the club's first team. Naturally, the academy boys follow them avidly and have their opinion on every player and on all controversial decisions of the referee. The tutors normally use newspaper reviews of the first team matches as materials for discussion. Additionally, they also present player's biographies as reading texts. All academy boys have certain role models among the successful senior players. It is very motivating for them to read texts and talk about them. Many language tutors use famous pop songs that the boys listen to in their spare time as listening activities. One tutor used DVDs of football matches and muted the commentary. As a speaking activity, the boys need to guess what the commentator would say in certain situations. Thus, specialised football vocabulary as well as grammar can be practised. In the next step, the boys listened to the recording and compared what they have got right.

Information technology (IT) is very prominent in modern language teaching. More and more teachers use the Internet, various software, learning communities, networks, etc. to motivate their learners. It was very surprising for me to find, that IT plays a very minor role in academy English courses. All tutors state that they use new media but when asked about details they told me that they mostly use DVDs and Mp3s. They show their learners English films, news or parts of football matches in order to listen to native English. Some players try to improve their English by watching English movies at home. At the beginning they activate the

subtitles in their mother tongues in order to follow the story. Some tutors use songs in the Mp3 format in order to teach English culture or listening comprehension. Only a few teachers try to use the Internet as a learning tool. Unfortunately, they did not really specify exactly how they use this medium for educational purposes. One teacher said that she used the interactive whiteboard only occasionally and does without any other form of IT because her students know far more about IT than herself. From various talks, I assumed that it is mostly used to teach English geography and culture. Not one teacher or player I interviewed told me that they used educational programs or email exchange in their teaching. This is astonishing as all the clubs use sophisticated computer programs in order to analyse the football performance of the players. They have regular sessions in which every aspect of the physical, technical and tactical performance is analysed but obviously they do not use software to teach English.

7.7 Academy overview

The following grid shows an overview of the organisation of the English courses in football academies and the teaching methods and resources used:

	Organisation of the English course	**Teaching methods and resources used**
Academy A	- compulsory English course - four hours a week - one course level - homework is given - small groups and private lessons - no official curriculum	- General English course book (New Headway) - games and quizzes around football related topics football terms at the beginning of the course - nutrition plan - match review of the local or national press - all 4 skills are taught - basic grammar - sometimes IT but no other ICT - different accents via CD - English culture through visits of the pub

Academy B	- compulsory English course - elementary to upper intermediate level - placement tests - three lessons per week - homework is given - no official curriculum	- football biographies - culture through CD recordings - football terms at the beginning of the course - word lists with football terms in different languages - all four skills are taught
Academy C	- football-related exercises in order to determine the level - courses twice a week	- every boy keeps a journal - main focus of the course is on verbs - the boys have to learn verb lists - telephoning newspaper ads - culture through idioms - football words and phrases - exams (without strict grading)
Academy D	- compulsory English courses - no official curriculum - homework is given	- a lot of football vocabulary - no IT at all - newspaper articles - match reports - football games - games and quizzes - vocabulary drill - post-it stickers with vocabulary - audio materials - basic grammar
Academy E	- course twice a week - no official curriculum - homework is given	- traditional course book and work book - a lot of Internet exercises - grammar has high priority - word lists, essay writing - quizzes and games - short presentations with a lot or practice - culture through magazines, trips to town - no dialect or slang words
Academy F	- course three hours per week - homework is given - regular assessment - no official curriculum - exams on a regular basis	- culture in form of dialect or slang words - humorous materials - listening/reading comprehension - quizzes, games, word lists, translations - no IT except for DVDs

Table 11: Overview of most important features of language curses at analysed football academies

7.8 Assessment and evaluation

The expectations of the clubs are a lot different to traditional English courses concerning learning outcome, progression, assessment and evaluation. There is no formal or official evaluation of the course as would be standard procedure in other ESP courses. Course evaluation occurs just via personal observation of the education and welfare officer and coaches that the players have learnt English quite quickly. The needs analysis clearly showed that there is hardly any form of

assessment within language courses in football clubs. It is debatable whether there would be a need for it. Most traditional language courses have a final exam. In football clubs, tutors give little tests and exams but there is rarely a consequence if the students fail them. Language courses at football academies are not about formal qualification, but about equipping the players with the necessary means to communicate outside the language classroom. At the end of the day, the full energy of the boys should focus on football and not language teaching.

Apart from that a very direct form of assessment takes place. When players, after weeks of language training, are still not able to communicate with their peers or understand the coach, then they have clearly failed the course requirements. Some language tutors have told me that they give tests and exams. In our talks it became clear that this assessment is done but has no consequence for the learners. If they fail, they just do it again. Even though most players seem to learn English quite quickly, to the extent that they can communicate with their fellow players, stricter assessment that is sanctioned in one way or other may lead to even quicker linguistic results and, in many cases, to even better performance on the pitch and integration into the team. Every academy analyses the football performance of its players. These results are printed out and hung on the wall so that every player knows where he has potential for improvement. As there are hardly any tests or other assessment in a language course, it would be a good idea to do a similar analysis for the linguistic performance of the players. This would make use of the fact that they are accustomed to the format and to the fact that there is always something to improve.

Neither the courses nor the language tutors are evaluated. In traditional ESP courses, stakeholders want to know how efficient a course is and thus demand an evaluation. In football clubs this evaluation seems to take place in a very informal way in the form of talks between the education and welfare officer and the language tutor.

7.9 Culture in language courses

> "One of the greatest allies the expat has in the quest to become culturally adept is the ability to speak the local language".
>
> Storti (2001:97)

When learning a language, it is not enough to master the grammar, vocabulary and phonology. It is equally important to grasp the cultural differences and similarities between one's home country and the country in which one is currently living. Brown (2000:177) states that "A language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture". All language teachers I interviewed stated that they integrated some form of culture into their teaching but they could not precisely tell me what form this culture teaching usually takes.

The foreign senior players who live alone or with their families in the outskirts of big cities sometimes only come into sparse contact with the culture they are living in. For the academy players, this is a different story. They either live with their fellow players (who are mostly English) or they live with English families. There they constantly come in contact with a new culture. Therefore, it might help them if they received information about the culture they are living in. All teachers stated that they included culture in their language courses. When looking a bit closer, it soon becomes clear that they all have a different understanding of culture, even though they all consider culture a very important part of their teaching. Those language tutors who use a traditional course book said that they teach the culture that is included in the book. They did not specify any further. One tutor, for example, regularly visits the pub and even has lessons there. She is of the opinion that the pub is an integral part of English culture and the boys should get to know the special atmosphere. Once a year she also invites the foreign boys to her home in order to see a typical English house. The boys at her academy stay in a lodge together, so they do not have many opportunities to experience English houses first hand.

Another tutor puts the emphasis on main feasts like Christmas or Easter. He shows the players what traditions are linked to these special occasions and what people do to make them special for their families. He presents typical greeting cards and explains how English people usually spend these days. Almost all the tutors reported that they have their learners listen to different British accents. There are many regional differences in dialects across Britain which the players need to become familiar with. This is especially important as many academy coaches have accents that are very hard to understand for the foreign boys. Through recordings and the subsequent explanations of the language tutor, they have a better chance of getting accustomed to these accents.

One language tutor approaches culture, among other activities, through idioms. He believes that idioms are very frequently used in the English language and that they are an essential part of the culture. He explains certain idioms by means of examples. First and foremost he uses idioms that are frequently heard in football commentaries. He teaches colloquial language, too. Adolescent boys especially use a lot of colloquial language. In order to be part of the group, it is very important for the foreign boys to understand it. Normally, the language tutors take their foreign players out to the pub or walk with them through the neighbourhood in order to explain cultural things to them. This becomes a very big problem with famous senior players. With them it is no longer possible to step out onto the streets without attracting the attention of the media. The very famous and well-known players are limited in these experiences. In some cases – especially with senior players – cultural things are much more of a challenge than language ones. For example, a club once had to help a Jewish couple with their relocation. As the woman refused to drive on what she called “the wrong side of the street” they had to find something within walking distance of the supermarkets and preferably close to good rail, bus and other public facilities. Players who relocate with their whole families have very practical needs, such as buying a bed or finding the right school for their children.

What exactly do we understand by “culture”? Agar (2002:20) notes that “culture happens when you learn to *use* a second language” and that “culture starts when you realize that you’ve got a problem with language, and the problem has to do with who you are”. When students learn a language within the confines of a classroom they mostly struggle with the grammar or pronunciation of a new language. Only when they use this newly learnt language in conversation with people in real life situations, they realise that language cannot be used without some cultural understanding (at least if you want to avoid misunderstanding). Language and culture are very closely related. The concept that describes this relationship best is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. In 1929 Edward Sapir published an article which changed the research in the field of language and culture. In his thesis he expressed the notion that the language of a culture influences the thinking of its people directly. According to Sapir (1929), “the network of cultural patterns of a civilization is indexed in the language which expresses that civilization”. Whorf (1940) developed Sapir’s ideas further. In his view (1940) the “formulation of ideas…differs, from slightly to greatly, between different grammars. We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages.” It follows that different people see the world in different ways. When the language determines how we think, then we must be aware of the fact that speakers of different languages also think differently. Linguists agree that the Sapir-Whorf-Hypothesis is exaggerated but what is clear is that geographic, climatic, kinesic, spatial, and proxemic aspects of a culture are reflected in its culture. Furthermore, various syntactic features of a language influence how people mentally organise their words.

Van Amelsvoort (1999) lists three reasons why expectations and cultural differences are problematic for students studying abroad. Very similar reasons are true for young football players who come to England:

1) The majority of the boys cannot envision the form that their new life of playing football and living abroad takes. Therefore, they do not know the extent to which their expectations may be unrealistic.

2) Given their age and experience young football players do not look at their everyday life as a system of culturally determined values and behaviours that could clash with those of their new host culture.
3) The playing abroad experience is defined by an individual player being matched with an individual host family. Therefore, the players need to get used to the idea that generalisations will not always hold true and need to learn skills that will help them to cope in their particular situation.

Honigstein (2008:22) states that for foreign players, the first weeks are a cultural shock. This might be true for the English culture as well as for the particular football culture of the country. One reason is the fact that a communication system is one of the most important elements of a culture. All symbols, whether verbal or non-verbal, are culture bound. Neuliep (2000:13) notes that culture has a dramatic affect on non-verbal communication, too. Special hand gestures, for example, have totally different meanings in different cultures. Intercultural communication occurs in all situations where at least two people from different cultures exchange verbal and non-verbal symbols within a particular context.

Pedersen (1995) identifies five stages of culture shock. Traditionally, culture shock was described as a U-curve starting at a high stage of fascination, dropping to the lowest point of the curve through e.g. disappointment and rising again when positive elements are recognised in the new culture. But the actual culture shock rarely follows this neat pattern. Pedersen's first stage of culture shock is called the "honeymoon stage". People who spend time in a different culture are still encapsulated by their own home-cultures and identities and they experience their stay abroad as a fascinating adventure. In the disintegration stage, the "host culture starts to intrude on the visitor's life in unexpected and often uncontrollable ways. It becomes necessary to solve practical problems in the host culture and move beyond the role of a spectator" (Pedersen 1995:79). It is the first stage in which people experience interaction with an unfamiliar culture. The next stage is called the "reintegration stage". The recovery process of the unfamiliar culture begins. Whereas, in the second stage anger over cultural

problems was directed towards oneself, the anger now is directed at others who are to blame. In the autonomy stage, visitors start to enjoy the host culture and build a new perspective on their own and the host country's culture. They become more relaxed and open to others and are able to solve situations with the help of their experiences of the new culture. In the last stage, the interdependence stage, people feel they belong to their old and their new culture. People have taken over some cultural elements and do not see them as foreign any more. The visitors now are aware of themselves as well as the cultural context around them. In a way, the fifth stage resembles the first stage in which people are competent in their own culture.

Even though it is very important to integrate culture, it is also a huge challenge. Ronowicz and Yallop (2007:2-3) note that "elementary and intermediate learners do not have enough proficiency in the language either to notice such nuances, even if they are exposed to them, or to apply such knowledge consistently while they are struggling with the language itself". Therefore, we should at least give them an understanding of some elements of English culture that they will encounter in their daily lives. In order to become aware of cultural differences, Ronowicz and Yallop (2007:45) propose to contrast the mother tongue to the second language. Students should ask themselves what they would do and say in various situations both in their own country and in England. Following the stages of culture shock, all staff at academies must be aware that acculturation is not a linear process which is easily predictable. It is important to acknowledge that players move through phases of culture shock which might influence their performance on the pitch.

Culture is in close relation to attitude. If the learners have a positive attitude toward the target language culture, they are also more successful in learning the language than learners who have a negative attitude toward the target language culture. For foreign football players in England the aspect of attitude is less problematic than for "normal" learners of English because academy players have a highly positive attitude toward their new home. At the age of about 16, they get

the once-in-a-lifetime chance to fulfil their dreams by playing for a famous football club. First and foremost, they want to succeed in the team but it is clear for them that they will only succeed when they are also able, within a very short amount of time, to communicate with their coaches and their fellow players. This does not mean, however, that they are better language learners or that they incorporate the new culture from the beginning. A lot of additional personal factors determine whether language acquisition is successful.

When researchers started to deal with culture in language teaching in the 1970s, culture was seen as facts that could be taught and learnt. The individual could not create or participate in the creation of culture. Recent models see culture as a very flexible and variable construct which is constantly shaped by the behaviours and different levels of attentions of the participants. According to Paige (1997 in Lange/Paige 2003:177), culture learning in this new perspective would include:

- learning about the self as a cultural being
- learning about culture and its impact on human communication, behaviour and identity;
- culture-general learning; i.e., learning about universal, cross-cultural phenomena such as cultural adjustment;
- culture-specific learning, i.e., learning about a particular culture, including its language; and
- learning how to learn, i.e., becoming an effective language and culture learner.

Researchers do not agree on a common definition of “culture” and thus, it is quite difficult to state what concept should be integrated into language teaching. Culture is comprised of two dimensions – the big C and the little c or, objective culture and subjective culture. What is meant by this is that culture can mean formal institutions, great figures of history, literature or arts on the one hand and aspects of our daily lives, like housing, clothing, food, tools, transportation, shopping, etc. on the other hand. Learners are thus faced with a twofold

challenge. In addition to the second language they also need to acquire the culture or, more precisely, they need to develop an intercultural competence.

7.9.1.1 Teaching English culture

Andersen et al. (2006:8) state that, "the view of culture is changing from the traditional or classical view of culture as synonymous with art and literature (…) into a view that includes the various ways of life of the members of the target language community within or across national borders". In a language teaching context it is interesting and necessary to deal with culture. Students need to know how native speakers use their language for communicative purposes but also how they behave, eat, talk, live and what their customs, beliefs, values and peculiarities are.

It is true, as most of the respondents I interviewed told me, that the players pick up the culture quite quickly. They live in England with their host families and see, feel and experience English culture every day. Many respondents also told me that, especially, young foreign players are often homesick. As Storti (2001:4) puts it, "wherever you live overseas, the list of things "they don't have here" sometimes seems to have been designed with you personally in mind." Mostly, it is not the big things, like not speaking the language or understanding the locals, but the many little things that are different or just not existent that frustrate the foreigner. I am aware that homesickness can exist for many reasons but I am convinced that one piece of the puzzle is the new culture. Rather than "picking up" the culture by living within it, I think it is important to prepare the players for what is waiting for them. Some clubs told me that they send a language tutor over to the boy's home country or send them information packages in order to make them familiar with the language. I would find it equally important to make them familiar with the new culture that they will be living in.

Even though we are living in a globalised world in which country, language and culture boundaries merge, there is still something like a local culture (peculiarities that can only be found in a particular area of the world). So what then – if they really exist - are the particularities of the English? There seems to be no doubt

that there *are* certain cultural peculiarities in England. Paxman (2007:3) ascribes them to the fact that Brits live on an island. For him “geography matters; it makes people who they are.” This is certainly true but I agree with Fox (2005) who thinks that geography plays a part but only a combination of climate, history and geography can possibly explain why the English are how they are.

There are many things that are substance for jokes and prejudices against the English, but it is only those parts of life that might affect football players the most when they enter the country that I am concerned with. I am well aware that culture to its full extent can only be experienced as a whole when people live in the country for some time. There are, however, a few cultural peculiarities which I think should be taught before or as soon as players come to England. There are, after all, hidden rules of behaviour (customs, way of life, ideas, beliefs, values, etc.) which are important to know and which Fox (2005), excellently summarised in her anthropological field studies.

Teaching culture seems to be an appropriate way to prepare foreign players for their stay in England. The only problem is that native English language tutors may have problems teaching their own culture. “After all, the people from a culture are the least likely to have ever observed or thought about their actions. They’ve had very little occasion to, for one thing, and no ready vantage point for another. Only if they have lived outside their culture would they have had the opportunity of actually seeing it” (Storti 2001:83).

7.9.1.1.1 The weather as a conversation starter

The weather, for example, is by far the most important topic English people talk about. But it is not the actual weather people want to discuss. Sentences like, “It’s nice today, isn’t it?” are more ritual greetings, conversation-starters and conversation fillers than enquiries about the weather. The real “value” lies in its reciprocity. The weather in England is changing quite quickly and so people always have to say something about the weather. As the English do not like to address people directly with the matter at hand they prefer the weather as a conversation starter. The important thing is to realise that it is expected that

people answer according to the hypothetical question. People would be baffled if they said, “Nice weather, isn’t it?” and the conversation partner would answer, “No, I think it’s not so nice, quite cold, really”. He or she would miss the whole point of the conversation starter. Apart from that the English find it very rude and consider it bad manners when foreigners criticise their weather. As Fox (2005) puts it, “…the weather may be one of the few things about which the English are still unselfconsciously and unashamedly patriotic”.

7.9.1.1.2 The notion of privacy

Another cultural thing that might be different in player’s home countries is privacy. Privacy is one of the most important things in English culture. The obsession with privacy is often mistaken by foreigners as being cold, reserved or unfriendly. It is, for example, not common for English people to invite somebody to their homes. Their homes are their own private places where they do not like to have too many “intruders”. Privacy also applies to the whole life of the English. They do not like to be asked directly about their family, occupation, house, etc. Such things are only openly discussed with close friends and family.

7.9.1.1.3 English humour, banter and jokes

Central to the English culture is humour – it is classless, omnipresent and omnipotent (Fox 2005:61). This is not to say that other cultures do not have any humour. What we find funny seems to be “surrounded by linguistic, geographical, diachronic, socio-cultural and personal boundaries” (Chiaro 1992:5). The distinctive characteristic about English humour is the value they put on it. It can be found nearly in every social interaction and can have the form of banter, teasing, irony, understatement, mockery, silliness, etc. What makes it very difficult for teachers to convey the meaning of jokes to language learners is the fact that “certain jokes are unthinkable outside the language in which they are formulated” (Alexander 1997:117). Shared knowledge and cultural awareness are essential for understanding jokes. It is not sufficient for foreigners to understand the linguistic system of English - they also need to share background assumptions, common prejudices and world knowledge in general. The English

do not take themselves too seriously and can laugh at themselves. Serious questions are often answered with ironic comments, which leaves foreigners wondering what is happening to them. This constant use of irony makes it especially hard for foreigners to detect when the English are being “serious” or just making fun.

Humour is a very important element of English communication. Banter is a form of humour which is often found in football clubs. All education and welfare officers in the academies I visited told me that there is a lot of banter going on between the boys. There exists very little literature on banter. One exception is Plester and Sayers’s study on functions of banter in the IT industry (2007). They (20007:158) define banter as, “deflating someone else’s ego to bring them to the same level as others”. Banter is a manifestation of a particular culture. This means that only when people understand the culture do they also understand the bantering and teasing that goes on between the members of this culture. According to Plester and Sayers (2007), banter has different functions. Among them are: making a point, relief of boredom, socialisation, celebrating differences, displaying the culture and highlighting and defining status. The most common form of banter is jocular abuse or teasing with the intention of reinforcing relationships. There is often a negative component in bantering which normally is met with a laughing response but when interpreted seriously, can lead to problems between the speaker and the hearer. Plester and Sayers (2007:159) note that banter often focuses on some “trait, habit, or characteristic of the recipient of the banter, who is then expected to participate with banter of their own”. And this is exactly where problems can arise in intercultural communication. English boys often use banter with the foreign players who do not understand what is being said. Their response is either laughter even though they have no clue what is being said. Or they are hurt, and misunderstanding or no understanding at all can make them become to outsiders of the social group. It is very difficult to teach humour but it is essential to integrate it into the English lesson. As it is part of English culture, it is possible to at least give the foreign players a bit of insight into it and explain idioms and ambiguous expressions to

them which they will most likely hear in the dressing room or when talking to their friends.

7.9.1.1.4 The English pub

Apart from their houses with at least a small stretch of green and their cars, the English love their pubs. They are a central part of their life and culture. The pub is interesting insofar as it has its own special rules. Whereas it is not accepted in English culture to start a conversation with a complete stranger, the pub is one of the few places where one can. What is very strange for foreigners is that there is no waiter service. People are expected to go to the counter and order their drinks and food. But even though pub regulars (people who visit the pub on a regular basis) are allowed to shout (even in bad language) to the bar staff, this is normally not allowed for “normal” guests. They are expected to stand in front of the bar and maybe make eye contact with the bar staff and wait until they are served. It is not custom, as in most central European countries, to give the bar staff a tip. Rather people buy the waiter a drink.

7.9.1.1.5 Queuing as a national phenomenon

One particularity of English culture that foreigners often make fun of is queuing. And, indeed, queuing is deeply ingrained in the English mind. Fox (2005) observed (and experienced herself) that even if just one single person is waiting e.g. for the bus he/she makes a queue of one behaving in such a way that it would be possible for others to join this “queue”. As the English are very polite, it is an enormous offense to try to jump a queue. This can probably be explained by the fair play that the English try to apply to every aspect of their lives. But also *because* they are so polite, they would never directly address the person who has jumped the queue. They would rather look at each other or huff at themselves.

7.10 Football English or General English

Due to their particular working and living conditions, football players have specific linguistic needs. If a club wants to offer an English course, the question is

whether the players need only football terms, a general English course, an “English for specific purposes “ course or a combination of these. Football players need a narrow and a wide-angle course design. Within their professional lives, they need a narrow, football-related vocabulary. As the academy boys also have a life outside the football pitch, they need the skills that are taught in a General English course. However, as Basturkmen (2003:61) points out, “when the students are fairly homogenous in relation to their target needs, then a narrow-angled course design is not only feasible, but likely to result.” Football players do not need English only for a limited range of communicative events which is typical for LSP courses.

In ESP courses, it is assumed that the learners are specialists in their domain and therefore do not need specialised vocabulary. Even though foreign football players think that the language of football is universal, they encounter a lot of problems in their daily lives in football clubs and academies. It is clear that most language problems occur off the pitch but especially at the beginning, it is essential that the players also learn football vocabulary. Maybe the problem lies in the definition of “football vocabulary”. Usually one subsumes terms like “goal, pass or kick” with it. Even though this is true, it is a lot more than that. At professional football clubs and academies, the players have comprehensive education and training in different fields of football which all have specialised vocabulary. No foreign player has problems with basic English football terms but as soon as they have to deal with nutrition, health, safety, body parts, tactical instruction or the physiotherapist they are all struggling. What is more, without specific football terminology, it is hardly possible to succeed on the pitch. There is a lot of communication during a football match and it is essential that every player understands it. Players talk among themselves, the goalkeeper gives instructions about how to defend, the coach suddenly needs to change the tactical order of the game or a player injures himself and quickly has to explain the physiotherapist what is wrong with him. Theoretically, many of these problems can be solved by trial and error but during a football match there is no time for that. What is more, there are also a lot of cultural differences when it

comes to injuries. Some foreign boys are taught not to show their pain even though they have serious injuries but others cry out loud when they have just minor injuries. This fact, together with the lack of English, makes the trial and error method extremely difficult for the physiotherapist on the pitch. It takes a lot of time for him to get to know the different characters of the boys in order to be able to judge what their problems might be.

The study has shown that football players do need specialised “football English” but it has also clearly shown that a lot of problems occur off pitch, too. It is essential that the team has a good team spirit. Without it, it is hardly possible to be successful on the pitch. But especially at football academies, this team spirit is built off pitch. The team becomes a second family for the boys. They spend their week with each other and compete together at the weekends. During this time, a lot of socialisation is going on which cannot function without knowledge of the language. Adolescent boys love to joke and to mock each other. If a foreign player does not understand the language, he will soon be an outsider. But insufficient knowledge of English can have even more dramatic effects than being an outsider. It can even effect the football careers of the academy boys. One academy reported that a Finnish boy had to leave the academy because he could not communicate with his fellow colleagues. He was homesick and ultimately had to return home.

What has become clear through the study is that foreign football players in the Premier League need what is universally described as “football terms” as well as General English in order to be able to integrate into the team and perform at their best on the pitch. This is what all academies try to teach in their courses. All language tutors told me that they teach football terminology at the beginning of a course, but the teaching of this football terminology differs quite significantly across academies. Some only talk about the basic vocabulary at the beginning of a new course. Others do the same but expand this basic vocabulary over time.

7.11 Different positions – different language requirements

The interviews and talks have clearly shown that different positions on the football pitch have different linguistic requirements. Football is a team sport. Therefore, it is essential for the team members to constantly communicate with each other. Players need to talk to each other during certain situations on the pitch. What is sometimes even more important is that they are able to tell each other what went wrong and to propose actions for improvements. It is no great revelation to state that players in different positions have different tasks on the pitch. So each unit of the field needs to use a different terminology and everybody on the pitch needs to know everybody else's pattern of play in case they have to fill in. It is essential that the boys not only understand what they themselves should do, they also need to know exactly the roles of their fellow players in order for the whole system to work.

The players need to know tactical things which all have to do with the position of the players on the field. If they are a fullback, they need to know how to cover the other defenders and how to break out with the ball and go and support the attack. It is essential that the boys have good skills with passing the ball. They need to know what is meant by passing a ball into the channels. Tactically, the coach would have to work with the defence knowing who's marking who or whether you are just going to mark a zone and take on whoever comes into that zone as your responsibility or whether you have a specific responsibility for a player. They need to know whether the defence is going to hold a high line - in other words, play high up the pitch which is ok, if you have a goalkeeper who can act as a sweeper for anything that comes over the top. Or they need to know whether the goalkeeper wants to defend deep and let the players in their position play in front of you. Similar tactical requirements apply for midfield players. A holding midfield player would sit in front of the back four and collect any free ball that came to him and start the play off by going forward. As an attacking midfield player you would try and get in advance of your strikers. Two wide midfield players would be part of the attacking force and would try and get behind the defenders and get

crosses in. Depending on the system you are playing, the strikers also need to communicate with each other. If there are two strikers on the field they have to be able to talk to each other. The ball might be coming to one of them but the other is in a better position so he just needs to shout “over”. Even though it is just one word he should use, he needs to be prepared to shout it without thinking.

The language situation is especially difficult for a goalkeeper. He has to learn very quickly to communicate with his back four defenders. They need to know when he is going to come for a ball and when he wants them to deal with it. The goalkeeper needs to be able to organise his defence on corners and free kicks. For example, on a corner you would normally have somebody screening the six-yard area. The goalkeeper must have the linguistic means to tell his fellow players whether they should position themselves on the near or the far post. He also needs to put somebody in the “hole” which is right between the goalkeeper and the defenders. This player needs to kick away the incoming corner. A goalkeeper also needs to tell his defenders to close players down in order to stop shots and he needs to tell his fullbacks to stop the winger from crossing.

What makes shouting all these orders difficult, is the fact that it has to be done without thinking because things happen very quickly on the pitch. But the story does not end here. When a goalkeeper has the ball safely in his hands, he then needs to organise his whole defence in order to play the ball out. Communicating with fellow players is not only important for the goalkeeper in the situation of corners but also when they have free kicks against them. The goalkeeper must organise his defensive wall. He needs to line up the defensive wall from his near post to the kick. For this, it is at least necessary to know basic things like “left” or “right”. The situation changes dramatically when the goalkeeper spots a player off the ball right before the free-kick who is in a dangerous position and who might get the ball and shoot. The goalkeeper then needs to take a player off a marked player in the box to get out to the player that he thinks is more dangerous. So as soon as the goalkeeper spots things he needs to be able to react and to tell his defenders how to deal with this situation.

In all these situations the players need to communicate with each other or understand what the coach is shouting at them. Otherwise the whole system on the pitch would not work. This is true for training sessions but even more so for matches. Foreign academy players mostly hear these tactical instructions for the first time. It is already difficult for them to implement the coaches' instruction from a football point of view but the situation becomes even more difficult when they are struggling with the language as well.

7.12 Coaching the foreign players

In traditional ESP courses, the technical vocabulary is taught by a subject specialist. Vocabulary used in texts acts as carrier content for an exercise and is not the real content of the exercise. The subject specialists in football clubs are the coaches who need to improve the football skills of the players. In the academies we encounter a very special situation, insofar as the coaches take over the subject specialist's role in language teaching without being fully aware of it. All foreign players told me, that the coaches do not really adjust their speech to their needs but, nevertheless, the boys constantly hear special vocabulary which they sooner or later know how to use. The academy coaches naturally spend a lot of time with the foreign boys. They are the ones who experience the language barrier first hand. They have to be very creative when they explain exercises and tactics to the foreign boys. At the beginning, when the foreign boys have hardly any command of English, they literally take them by the hand and walk them through various exercises. In a later stage, they pair them with an English native speaker so that the foreigners have the chance to hear the explanations again from someone else. When explaining exercises to the whole team, hardly any coach is considerate of the foreign players. Coaches do not repeat words or phrases or speak slower in order for the foreigners to better understand. What makes life even harder for the foreign players is the fact that many coaches have accents which are very difficult to understand. Most players need quite some time to get accustomed to that.

As the language tutor is not allowed to be present at training sessions, the coaches often have to take over his or her role. They try to teach the players the relevant words and phrases they would need on the pitch in order to communicate with their fellow players or simply to understand the exercises. All coaches use visual aids when working with foreign boys. Their most important tools apart from partner exercises and walking a boy through an exercise are tactics boards and videos. In some cases coaches simply do not realise that certain behaviour of foreign boys is a consequence of their linguistic limitations. Often English boys do not perform an exercise as they should and if that happens to foreign boys, coaches just assume that they are lazy or do not concentrate enough.

7.13 Living conditions of the foreign players

All academies are aware that it is not easy for foreign boys to leave their home country, their family and friends at an early age in order to live in England. What is more, the young players are all under a lot of pressure because they dream of a career as a football professional and they know that this goal is hard to reach. All academies try to help the boys as best as possible. Homesickness is a big problem and as a consequence, clubs spend a lot of money to do something against it. One academy, for example, assembled a welcome package in which the most important information as well as translations of football terms can be found. Furthermore, the clubs pay for the parents and friends of the boys to come to England several times a year. Additionally, the boys spend weekends at home as well.

The academy also takes care of the living situation of the foreign boys. The adolescent players either live together in a house with “house parents” who are responsible for them or are placed in individual English families. Academy personnel try very hard to find host families in which at least one parent speaks the language of the foreign boy. Thus, the boy does not feel lost and can communicate with his new family. The new living conditions can sometimes be problematic for the host parents as well as the foreign players. To my knowledge,

there is no special literature that deals with host parents for young football players. For years, student exchange programs have existed all over the globe and experiences from this field can be adapted and applied to the football situation as well. In particular there are two publications (Grove,1989: Orientation Handbook for Youth Exchange Programs; King/Huff, 1997: Host Family Survival Kit) which can be helpful for football academies. It is very important to state that host parents have different responsibilities from natural parents. They are not responsible for forming the personality of the player. They are first and foremost caregivers and make sure that the adolescent is properly housed, fed and protected from harm. In terms of education, host parents need a lot of sensitivity as they do not always know if certain behaviour in England would also be considered proper behaviour in the home country of the boy. The two basic aspects of hosting a foreign player according to King and Huff (1997:19) are: (1) sharing your lifestyle with a young person from another country and (2) providing a helping hand. In many cases the boys need somebody who explains the new culture to them. After all, it is mostly trivial matters that can cause the worst misunderstandings.

8 Conclusion

8.1 Conclusive summary

The main aim of this study has been to look at linguistic needs, tutoring options and support mechanisms in order to develop a framework of an ESP (English for Specific Purposes) course for foreign football players in the English Premier League.

After a general introduction, chapter two has shown that ESP as a separate discipline needed some time to come of age and to be accepted within applied linguistics. It has taken over and adapted certain elements of General English teaching but also developed new mechanisms for preparing adults linguistically for their professional lives. Ideally, every ESP course design should start with a thorough needs analysis which forms the basis for the goals and objectives of the course. Like a General English (GE) course an ESP course also follows a syllabus, uses certain teaching methods and tests and assesses its learners. The main difference lies in the role of the ESP tutor, who is hardly ever an expert in the target field. Contrary to most traditional English courses, the ESP tutor cannot fall back on ready-made materials. In the majority of the cases, he/she has to take over the role of the materials' designer as well.

After having looked at the ESP field in detail, chapter three has dealt with individual learners' differences and has tried to find out how factors such as age, aptitude, motivation, learning styles, learning strategies and personality influence second language acquisition. In order to teach a second language, it is important to know the target group of the course with all its strengths and weaknesses and how different personalities and age groups acquire a language.

It is equally important to have knowledge about how people in general acquire a second language. There is a long history of linguists whose research has contributed to a greater understanding of how people process information and are able to learn a language other than their mother tongue. Chapter four,

therefore, has provided an overview of theories of second language acquisition. It started with research of the early years of second language acquisition and gave a historical overview of the field until the present day. It has become clear that nowadays there exist a plethora of theories, hypotheses and models but there is no comprehensible theory of SLA which incorporates all the elements that play a role in the acquisition of a second language.

Chapter five provided an introduction to the empirical part of the study. It looked into the situation of foreign football players in the English Premier League and tried to find out how intercultural communication works in football clubs. Senior players who only have little motivation to learn English and often do not even take an English course, are not the right target audience to analyse. Therefore, the football academy, its structure and especially its players have been the centre of attention in chapter five.

Chapter six comprised of the research conducted at six football academies in England. Through interviews, personal talks, telephone conversations and questionnaires, the situation of foreign football players at academies and their language problems were determined. For the study the foreign academy players, their potential language problems, the language courses academies offer, the language tutor who teaches these courses and the language situation between foreign players and coaches were looked at in detail.

Chapter seven analysed the findings of the study in thirteen subchapters and, together with theoretical background, tried to answer the research questions which were posed in the previous chapter. Attention was given to the language needs of foreign players and the language learning differences as well as physical differences between senior and youth football players. Furthermore, the language teaching situation, the language tutor, the skills to be taught, the organisation of language courses, teaching methods and materials, assessment and evaluation and culture in language courses at football academies were analysed. The question whether General English or “Football English” should be taught was discussed as well. An interesting issue was to look at the different

language problems and language requirements of various nationalities and positions on the field.

Overall the study has revealed that although even though senior players sometimes deny it, foreign football players encounter many language problems on and off the pitch. Senior players who only spend little time with their teammates try very hard to overlook that fact, as they have problems motivating themselves to attend an English course. Academy players appreciate receiving language education at their clubs. It can be stated that there are a number of differences between senior and academy players with regards to language needs and motivation to learn English.

English courses differ quite a lot between academies. This is due to the fact that even though all academies are confronted with similar linguistic problems and a very similar target group, there is no official curriculum or course plan. Language tutors decide, often with the help of the education and welfare officer, what to teach. Each language tutor teaches what he/she considers best for the players. What they all agree on, however, is that the courses have to be organised a lot differently than at school in order to keep the players motivated. This means that there is rarely any consequence if homework is not done or if the very few tests or exams are failed. Language tutors at football academies, like in any ESP course, need to be materials designers as well. Some of them use traditional course books but all of them have to write materials themselves. Even though football players first and foremost need to be able to speak and understand English, all four skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) should be taught in a language course as they are interdependent. Furthermore, grammar, pronunciation and pragmatics should be incorporated into the course curriculum. Boys who join a football academy are quite young. They are about 15/16 years old and the majority have not lived abroad alone. In order for them to get used to their new surroundings, some knowledge of English culture is necessary, too.

There is no doubt, that football academies do a great job coaching and educating young people. Whether it is good to give thousands of boys the hope of

becoming the next super stars is a different story. Although hardly any football club is interested in the language skills of a foreign player before signing him, every academy employs one (or more) highly motivated language tutor(s) who tries to find the best methods and exercises for foreign football players as English learners. It is very important for the boys and gives them a lot of confidence in a foreign country when they are able to understand and talk to their fellow players and coaches. What is equally important for them is to be able to communicate with the physiotherapist. In the case of an injury the boys are under great distress anyway. Lack of the language and, as a consequence not being able to tell or understand what the exact problem is increases the distress even further.

It has become very clear that there are huge differences in the language requirements for different positions on the field. A goalkeeper, for example, needs to talk more than a striker. This has to be taken into account when signing and working with foreign players who do not speak English. The boys need some time to get accustomed to the football played in England as well as to the language requirements for their respective positions. Coaches very often play a very important role in this learning process, as they also have to take over the role of the language tutor.

A claim made by football professionals is that the language of football is universal and there is no need to learn the local language. Whether the language of football really is universal is not so easy to answer. Of course, there is some universal element when it comes to the rules of the game and certain fixed tactical systems. In such cases, it depends very much on the individual player. Senior players may not have so many problems if they do not understand the local language because they have played in various teams under various coaches before. Academy players struggle much more. They are in the learning phase and apart from the general rules of the game need to learn the tactical systems. Therefore, they need to understand exactly what their coaches are telling them in order to perform the exercises correctly. Furthermore, as has been mentioned earlier, it is not clear what is meant by “football language”. This study

has shown that it is much more than just the rules. It encompasses the directives given by the fellow colleagues on the pitch as well as vocabulary concerning body parts and descriptions of exercises. This language cannot be universal as one does not get very far only on sign language and prior knowledge. This means that there is a clear need for the foreign players to learn the local language in order to successfully perform on (and off) the pitch. Furthermore, all foreign players have problems understanding local accents which sometimes makes it hard for them to follow the instructions of their coaches who come from all corners of the country. In addition, the pace of the spoken language is problematic for the foreign players.

The greatest drawback in designing a language course at academies is the fact that language tutors are not allowed to be present at training sessions or talks between players and coaches. They have to rely on the input of coaches, education and welfare officers, physiotherapists and the players themselves. Most of them try to teach football language as well as topics of general interest to the players. They also attempt to include a certain amount of culture, but this culture teaching differs a lot among the academy courses.

This study is of relevance for everyone working in the field of football and youth football in particular. English teachers who are approached by football clubs may find this study a valuable resource for their future employment. They are language experts but might not necessarily know what they should expect at football clubs. I would like to note that I do not want to assume things that language teachers who already work at academies know much better because they work with the players every week. I wanted to collect insights of as many language tutors as possible in order to give a comprehensive picture of the language teaching situation at English academies and football clubs. All education and welfare officers of the academies I visited told me that they were very interested in my findings as it is important for them to get the view of an outsider. They are the ones who have experience with football life but this study could provide them with scientific and pedagogical insights that can be used in

their courses. Furthermore, it might be interesting for anyone outside England who prepares boys for a life in an English football academy. Usually scouts and clubs are exclusively interested in the football abilities of (young) players. When scouting a boy, it is of little or even no interest whether he speaks English. But in order for the boy to be successful in a new environment and a new culture it is very important for him

to be prepared for his new life abroad.

8.2 Suggestions for improvements

Most of the organised English courses take place at academy level. This is not surprising insofar as the young players have neither finished their football education nor their academic education. In order to perform on the pitch, they need specialised language which is taught in ESP courses at football academies. As they have a life off the pitch, they need General English as well but to integrate into the team as quickly as possible and in order to understand the coaches, they need “football English”. Therefore, English courses at football academies need to be ESP courses with a unique syllabus, unique methods and, first and foremost, with unique teaching materials. Given as the basis the study undertaken at football academies and the existing literature, the following elements could improve English courses at football academies and, as a consequence, the linguistic and cultural abilities of foreign academy players in the English Premier League. Some suggestions may be new, others may be already implemented by certain language tutors. All these suggestions, tutoring options and support mechanisms in combination with the theoretical background of course planning, could be part of a framework of an ESP course for foreign football players in the English Premier League and improve their lives in a foreign country.

Prevention of “country shock”

Apart from the culture, there are other factors that make life hard for players who come from different or far away countries. One such factor is the climate. Storti

(2001:3) deals with expats who are sent to foreign countries by their companies, but his observations can easily be applied to foreign football players in England. According to him, “climate can in fact wreak havoc on the unsuspecting expat: on your body, your health, your lifestyle,…., and (sooner or later) your mind.” This is especially true for African players who come to England. In the last years it has become very popular to employ African players, as they are not only cheaper than European ones but also bring good football qualities.

Further problems which Storti (2001) calls “country shock” rather than “culture shock” are: changing routines (everything that is known and familiar changes), unfamiliar faces (for 24 hours you are together with people you don’t know), emotional effort in order to give a good impression, many adjustments that all have to be met at the same time and wives and girlfriends whose lives change dramatically.

To prevent any form of shock for the young football player, it is advisable to inform him about the most important aspects of his new life in a football club. Newly employed players generally fly to England to have a look at the academy and get an idea of the new life that lies ahead. As seen in the interviews, some clubs already assemble some football terms for the boys to get them familiar with the new language. But there does not seem to be a comprehensible information pack that can be used by every academy. Such information would need to cover as many areas of the boy’s new life as possible. Young football players coming to English football academies could be informed explicitly about certain areas of their lives. Of course, it always depends how good the English of the player is. The information, however, could also be provided in the boy’s mother tongue, if he does not speak English, and the following suggestions could also be covered as topics within the English course. Naturally, there are areas of life that are of immediate importance upon entering and living in a new country. Among them are:

- Nourishment: where/what can I eat
- Housing: where do I live and rest

- Organisation of the academy: who can I turn to at the academy, when and where do I have to show up for training

In a following stage the boy needs to be informed and helped with:

- Organisation of away matches
- Currency: how do I convert Pounds
- Special personal needs: when can I meet my house parents
- Basic language skills
- Daily routines in the academy
- Telephone/Internet/post
- Health and safety
- Immediate vicinity

At a later stage the players need to know about:

- Time usage, schedules
- Transportation
- Organisation of the language course, general education
- Shopping possibilities
- Extended vicinity
- Social patterns
- Cultural values

Pre-departure aid for the foreign boys

There is no doubt that being signed by a big club/an academy is a dream come true for all young football players. They are so excited about playing football that it is difficult for them to grasp what it means to live abroad for an extended period of time. Grove (1989:56) illustrates this very well by stating that, “it is almost impossible to convey to people with no prior experience a satisfactory understanding of the nature of culture differences.” It is, therefore, important that the boys are prepared for what lies ahead of them. Similarly Bourke (2002:383) notes that “due to the lack of prior preparation, new players on arrival in England, may experience a sense of loss regarding their old cultural environment, as well

as confusion, rejection, self-doubt and decreased self-esteem from working in a new and unfamiliar cultural setting."

Except for one club which tried to get the boy in contact with the English language even before his departure to England (which was described as very basic), the boy's first contact with the language is upon arrival in England. This arrival puts a lot of stress on the teenage player. He has to cope with new surroundings, new colleagues, new house parents, new staff at the academy and much more. It may be a good idea for the clubs to get into contact with the boys' parents and teachers to arrange an intensive English course before the departure to England. This way the language tutor can find out about the learning habits and learning style of the boy and the young player will know the most important terms, which will thus reduce the stress in the new surroundings. To contact the teacher of the boy may sound like an enormous effort, but when a boy is signed by an academy, there are already quite a few people involved. One more person within this process would not be much additional effort.

Common language pack

As foreign boys who come to England all have the same language requirements, it may be efficient for the clubs to have one and the same "language pack". One element of such a language pack could be the word lists that one academy has already assembled. They put together the most important football terms in four languages. Technology has made it possible for learners to learn outside the classroom. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:204pp) propose five modes of technology (videos, CD-Rom, Internet, E-Mail and computer aided language learning). These could be good alternatives for players who are constantly on the move, do not have enough time to follow the language courses but need to learn the essential football terms as quickly as possible after their arrival in England.

Clubs could not only create and send out word lists to the future players but they could have these word lists recorded as mp3s. Every player has his mp3 player where he could listen to the new words while still in his home country. Additional

value would be if the spoken parts of the language pack were spoken and recorded by the actual coach and the staff the player will most frequently have to most frequent contact with. This would have the advantage that the player could become accustomed to special accents. Nearly all foreign players reported that the most difficult people to understand were those with special British accents. As most of the players have the latest mobile phone models as well as laptops, it would also be possible to use special applications for grammar or vocabulary learning. They travel a great deal and spend a lot of time in buses, airports and aeroplanes where they could improve their language skills without carrying around their course books and notes but with the aid of their mobile phones and laptops.

In addition to word lists or recordings of general football terms, it would be helpful to have a translation of the most important injuries. Foreign boys are overwhelmed by their surroundings anyway and injuries can make their situation even worse. They feel helpless if they are not able to tell medical staff what is wrong with them. Even though the doctors and physiotherapists working for football academies do their utmost to help injured boys, in most cases they can only find out about the condition of a boy through trial and error. In these situations, it would help a lot if the boy (or the medical staff) could refer to a translation of the most important body parts and common injuries. This would also help to calm the injured boy who might not have a clue whether his injury is of a minor or major nature.

Player's exchange with his host parents

Problems between the host families and the foreign boys can occur in many situations of everyday life. These problems may be lesser for boys from a European country and greater for boys from a different continent and can affect (Grove 1989:91):

- How the family meets its physical needs: use of toilet, use of electricity, use of gas/oil/wood, storing belongings, sleeping, bathing, food and drink, meals and snacks, washing clothes

- How the family expects its members to behave: use of television, use of kitchen and its appliances, family religious practice, family rituals and activities, household chores, use of telephone, public and private spaces, entering and leaving the house, scheduling and punctuality, family communication
- Special situations of some families: treatment of pets and animals, rules governing alcoholic beverages, curfews, rules governing smoking, precautions against crime

Additionally, there are many unspoken cultural rules and certain topics that host families should discuss with the foreign player in order to avoid misunderstandings (King and Huff 1997:101). These topics include:

- How to express appreciation/thanks in the family
- How to express disagreement
- What it means to be punctual
- When and where the boys can entertain their friends and fellow players
- The meaning of a shut and/or locked door
- Appropriate bathroom etiquette and hygiene

It is not easy for a teenager to live as a member of a new family in an unfamiliar culture for an extended period of time. Even though the education and welfare officer in each academy tries to find the most suitable host parents (with ideally one parent speaking the mother tongue of the boy), it is still a very unfamiliar surrounding for the young person. But it is not only the boy who is nervous. The host parents also do not know what to expect. There is uncertainty on both ends and to ease this, it would be a good idea if the host parents and the players could get in contact with each other before the boy comes to England. An e-mail exchange would be enough to get to know each other a little bit beforehand. This may prevent misunderstandings and give both parties a feeling for each other. Furthermore, the host parents and players could use Internet tools like Skype or Facebook in order to establish contact with one another. Thus, it makes it easier for both sides to arrange for the actual stay. These contacts via the Internet not

only serve the purpose of exchanging information but they are also a good opportunity for the foreign boys to start practicing their English.

It is important for the host parents to know as early as possible whether the boy is allergic to something or even small details such as what he likes or does not like to eat. Perhaps the academy could also assemble a general information pack about the normal schedule of the boy which is handed over to the host parents as well as the boy. Furthermore, there are practical aspects involved when a boy lives in a host family. The family needs to know whether it is necessary to drive the boy to the training ground or whether it is possible for the boy to take a local bus. Host parents may be interested in the home country of the boy, so the teenager should be prepared to tell something about the area and the country he comes from. Even though the boy's only aim is to become a professional football player and most aspects of their and their host family's lives are centred around football, they are, at the end of the day, also "ambassadors" for their country. As such, they also have a certain responsibility in either further strengthening or reducing prejudices against certain nationalities.

It is essential that the host parents receive an official letter from the academy telling them as much about the boy and the whole exchange arrangement as possible. It may be possible for the academy to provide the host family with a few details about the boy's home country. This can help prevent misunderstandings or discussions and helps to explain possible unfamiliar behaviour of the teenager. One can only try to give the boy, as well as the host family, as much information about each other as possible but reality will show that it is impossible to prevent every potential problem that may occur.

For most natural parents, it is very important to know that their son is ok and feels at home in his new host family. E-mail contact between the two families and between the academy and the natural parents ensures that the natural parents know what is going on and do not need to be concerned.

Full-time employment for the language tutor

The language tutor at academy A suggested that language tutors should be employed full time and may be shared among two or three clubs. In this way, he/she would be able to work more closely together with other staff. Furthermore, the foreign boys would have the opportunity to meet the tutor outside the language courses and talk more freely with the coaches. The language tutor, on the other hand, would be in a better situation to see in which situations the foreign boys need English. At the moment, the language tutors in most academies are only present for their courses or even teach their courses outside the academy. They are in permanent contact with the education and welfare officer but they are not really part of the core academy team. They could, for example, work closer together with the coaches. Every coach prepares for his training sessions. There are certain exercises that may be difficult to understand for the foreign players. In order to explain the unknown words and phrases or even the whole exercises afterwards, it could be an idea to explain them beforehand in the course. Thus, neither the foreign players nor the coaches are disappointed by potential mistakes of the boys.

Furthermore, the language tutor could assist the coaches in analysing the football performance of the boys. The performance is regularly recorded within a database, printed out and discussed with the players. Language tutors could save everyone involved some time and frustration by explaining the performance together with the coach. The coaches are interested mostly in the football side whereas the language tutors know which words the foreign boys understand and in which occasions synonyms could be used to improve understanding. An additional advantage of such a system would be that the language tutor learns what terms and phrases the foreign boys really need. It is always easier to experience something first hand than get the information from someone else. What can make this exchange especially difficult is the fact that the people involved come from different domains and therefore use a different vocabulary when talking about certain things. Perhaps it is necessary that the clubs and especially the academies, see the language tutors as members of staff rather than external experts in one field only who only teach their courses.

The language tutor needs to provide information that exceeds that of an English course especially for the foreign players. In some clubs, the player liaison officer takes care of these things but in others, the language tutor needs to help the players a great deal with practical things. These issues often concern typical cultural aspects, for example, to tell the players what number they have to dial before the actual telephone number in order to make their number not displayed. From the interviews I additionally deduced that it would be a good idea that the language tutor were present in training sessions and matches. But if the language tutor were present everywhere where language problems occur, it would be difficult for women to work in such positions. It would not be possible to enter the dressing rooms or be present at medical examinations. Incomprehensible banter and jokes for foreign boys occur very often in the dressing room and in this way it will never be possible for the language tutor to find out what exactly the foreigners need in terms of English. On the other hand, women seem to be very well accepted as language tutors at academies. Only one boy said that he would rather have a male tutor. All the other boys of the academies did not comment about it. The reason for this is that they perhaps see the language course as not being so closely linked to the other areas of academy life as it should be.

Clubs and academies deal with the situation with the language tutor quite differently. In some academies, the tutor is considered as exclusive teaching staff who is in contact with the education and welfare officer but with nobody else within the academy. In other clubs, the tutor is integrated to a certain extent in additional aspects of the academy or club life.

Content of the English course and learning aids

Young academy players are faced with a very special situation when it comes to language learning. The players should learn “Football English” as fast as possible in order to become better players and to feel comfortable on the pitch. Additionally, they simultaneously should learn General English because they now live in the new culture and need to speak and understand English. A solution to

that would be a course that comprises two parts – an intensive football-ESP course with all the necessary words and phrases and a General English course with reference to different football contexts.

This might help them to communicate better with their fellow colleagues and to avoid misunderstandings. In order to actually communicate with their fellow colleagues, they of course need the grammar and the vocabulary of a General English course. In football academies, it would be very beneficial if the coaches and the tutors would be in constant contact with each other in order for the tutor to recycle certain words or phrases that came up during training sessions. For traditional English language courses, an abundance of course books already exists whereas for the ESP course in a football club or academy, the language tutor needs to design his/her own materials. In some cases, he/she may be able to use traditional text books but for football specific language issues the design of the appropriate materials is up to the tutor.

Concerning improvements to teaching and learning aids, the language tutor of academy C told me that the best resource would be a picture dictionary with every room in the house and different shops. Along with the picture dictionary the tutor has to ensure that, within six or eight months, the boys know about 300 verbs. Verbs seem to be the most important language items the boys need and want to learn. They are of the opinion that they know enough football vocabulary to get by but they lack the verbs to express themselves or explain something. Furthermore, it is important give them some specifics about their “job” as a football player and verbs that will be used in certain processes. Verbs seem to help the boys most to express themselves and to understand others.

Teaching resources for football players should be available in printed as well as in digital format. Players need to be able to look at them wherever they are. One of the biggest problems for course organisation is the irregular schedule of the players. Many of them are often away to play for their national teams. Nearly every player has a laptop with him, so why not use it not only for watching DVDs or surfing the Internet but also for improving English through dedicated software

programs and exercises? That they were travelling and could not do their homework would no longer be an acceptable excuse.

Exchange between academy tutors

All academies do their best to develop the young players personally and professionally. When it comes to language education they unfortunately do not pool their resources (probably due to the overall secrecy). Language tutors at football academies work alone and to a great deal autonomously. Language tutors who are employed by football academies have a sound professional background and a lot of experience in teaching English. They all have different and quite interesting teaching and personal backgrounds as well as football experience, and thus their combined knowledge would further improve the language teaching within the academies. Their colleagues at other clubs are faced with the same or very similar problems, but for various reasons language tutors do not exchange ideas, methods or teaching materials. Foreign players who play in football academies all over England are all faced with very similar linguistic problems. They all try to overcome them in language courses. As the target group is quite similar in all academies, each language tutor has to reinvent the wheel. Most of them have developed special materials or teaching resources which proved to work very well with foreign academy players. It really is a pity that this wealth of resources is not shared and assembled into one teaching aid. In order to improve the whole academy language teaching system a central database and an online platform for language tutors would be a good idea. Thus, the tutors would get the chance to exchange ideas and materials and to discuss teaching challenges and possible solutions.

Different course requirements

Even though senior and academy players have similar language needs there are also differences. As could be seen from the study, senior players need a lot of family related topics whereas for their younger colleagues football terms in the broadest sense are of great importance. Both learner groups also have a life

outside football but these linguistic needs differ significantly. Therefore, teaching materials need to be designed differently designed for foreign senior and academy players.

A solution would be a modular system with various degrees of difficulty. Each module could deal with one topic but this topic should be presented at three different levels. Thus, it would also be possible for small clubs where students of different levels are taught at the same time to differentiate. The modules could be split up into football-related topics and topics of interest for foreign players outside the pitch. Furthermore, there could be different modules for speaking or listening activities depending on the accents of the coaches employed at the academy.

Foreign language learners in football academies are a homogenous group concerning their professional ambitions. They all want to make it to the Premier League and become successful players. When it comes to their learning abilities and their knowledge of English, they are highly heterogeneous. Even though the content they need to learn is the same, they ideally are split up into groups of different levels and abilities. They all have a different level of motivation, prior knowledge of English, learning style, aptitude and personality. The language tutor needs to cater to all these different needs by establishing them and finding the most suitable teaching methods. In most cases, the foreign players “only” need to improve their language skills but some of them need to master an additional challenge of learning a different orthographic system. They clearly need more time to read and write in the L2 than learners of the same orthographic system.

Ideally players of the same nationality are put into one course. Thus, it is possible to address the specific language problems of this nationality. This is especially important for pronunciation problems. Specific sounds are problematic for certain native speakers and unproblematic for others.

<u>The use of various dictionaries</u>

What was quite striking for me was to notice that no language tutor told me that he/she uses a traditional dictionary as a teaching and learning resource. This is unfortunate because I think that apart from a picture dictionary, the boys should learn how to use a traditional dictionary. Even though they all have laptops and computers, it may sometimes be more convenient to have a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words. As the usage of a dictionary in a foreign language is not so easy, it may be a good idea to equip the language learners with this knowledge as well and make them aware of the possible problems they may encounter.

What would help the foreign boys, too, would be special football dictionaries. Some academies have assembled welcome packages for foreign boys which, among other items, include a kind of multilingual dictionary. The coach of one academy told me that all the staff sat together to assemble this list. This is a great help for foreign boys but some of this work has already been done. There exist various football dictionaries which list words and phrases within the context of football in different languages. Foreign boys could use these dictionaries in cases where they are not immediately able to ask their language tutor. They are mostly published before European Championships or World Cups and come in many different formats. Among others Langenscheidt published an extensive multilingual (German, English, French) “Praxiswörterbuch Fußball” in cooperation with the UEFA, Reise Know-How offers a “Kauderwelsch Dicitionary” in seven languages (German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Turkish) which covers the most important words and phrases and, for example, Pons conveniently assembled the “Überlebenswortschatz Fußball” in a pocket format, also in seven languages (German, English, French, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish). All these dictionaries would be great sources for foreign players in football clubs. There would not be the need for every club or academy to individually assemble important football terms. They could just take the words with their translations out of one of the dictionaries and assemble their lists for the boys.

An additional picture dictionary could solve the communication problem between a foreign player and the physiotherapist. Posters with translations of medical terms alongside pictures could help the players to tell the physiotherapist what their medical problem is. Another solution would be a closer cooperation between language tutors and physiotherapists.

Listening situations of footballers

Listening is one of the most difficult skills in a foreign language. Within football academies, foreign players are confronted with the problem that they need to learn to listen to the English spoken in the region where they play. In addition to that, they often have coaches who do not come from this particular region and speak with an accent which sounds totally different to the boys and, therefore, is hard to understand. Language tutors could (if they are allowed) record training sessions and use the recordings as listening comprehensions in their lessons. The use of listening comprehensions is normal standard anyway, so why not use authentic language that boys need to understand every day? Thus, the boys could be made familiar with the different accents spoken by the academy staff. The advantage of using such materials in class is that the tutor can stop the recording and explain certain aspects. Furthermore, the boys get the chance to listen to it several times in a more relaxed atmosphere than on the pitch. Whenever they are on the pitch it is important that they improve their football performance. They do not have time to think about language aspects but have to do the exercise as perfectly as possible.

Different language requirements for different positions on the pitch

As a goalkeeper is so important for a football team, it would be a good idea to assemble football vocabulary especially for this position. It would make sense if foreign players received this vocabulary list before their departure to England. Thus, they can make themselves familiar with it and have an easier life in their first training sessions. The most important basic words a goalkeeper should know, according to one of the coaches in academy A, are: *squeeze*, when the

defenders should run out of the box, *switch or split* when the players should make the field broader and should run near the touchline and *keeper*, when the keeper runs out and catches the ball. But it is equally important that the defenders understand what the goalkeeper is shouting. Furthermore, it is essential that the players who perform a free kick speak and understand English. Teams always have a repertoire of free kick tricks. Depending on the distance to the goal, the players decide what trick needs to be applied. In order to do so, it is very important that all players involved understand what is going to happen.

Comprehensible input

It is indisputable that learners need comprehensible input. What happens to foreign players at football clubs/academies is that they receive a lot of input from many different sources (colleagues, coaches, physiotherapists, education and welfare officer, etc.) who all have different accents and ways of articulating themselves. It is possible that foreign players – especially at the beginning of their stay - are overstrained by this multiple input. A possible solution for the initial phase could be a kind of a “buddy system” in which a foreigner is paired with an English player who is his prime contact person who explains everything and with whom the foreign players tries his first English words.

Academy players have many training sessions during a normal week. Their main contact persons are the coaches. The job of the coaches is first and foremost to improve the football skills of the boys. In academies that employ many foreign players it is important, too, that the coaches know about the linguistic problems these players face. Foreign players should always have the chance to ask and clarify when a coach explains a certain exercise. Furthermore, coaches need to be aware that foreign players may ask their colleagues when they have not understood a coach’s explanation. Discipline is very important in football teams but talking to colleagues in order to clarify should not be seen as bad discipline.

8.3 Outlook – suggestions for future research

The main aim of this dissertation has been to look at linguistic needs, tutoring options and support mechanisms for foreign players in the English Premier League. Through my interviews, it became clear that senior players are not the main target group for language courses as they do not have enough time and/or are not motivated enough. Language courses on a regular basis take place at Premier League Football Academies. All academies employ language tutors who do a great job but have to reinvent the wheel. Each tutor has to plan courses which take place in more or less the same way in all other academies. So why not work together, pool the resources and materials of all the tutors and develop a common official curriculum for all football academies?

The English academy system is relatively new and in some academies they are only starting to build language opportunities for foreign players whereas in other academies they have been teaching English for years now. Perhaps now is the time is to evaluate the established language systems and courses at academies on a broader scale in order to be able for the newer systems to avoid mistakes. But the FA, the Premier League and the Football League have not managed to define common independent standards for football academies as suggested in the Lewis' report. Considering this, it will be equally difficult for them to agree on common standards for language development for foreign players.

Every coach and every education and welfare officer at the football academies I visited told me that they were amazed how quickly the boys learn English. They also confirmed that there is a correlation between the boys' language skills and their performance on the pitch. It would be interesting to find out how the performance of the players would increase if they learnt English even more quickly. To my knowledge there does not exist any scientific study that analyses how strong the correlation between language skills and performance on the pitch really is. Until now, we have only been able to judge by personal impression.

Furthermore, it would be necessary to conduct a longitudinal study to find out what football vocabulary really is. For that purpose researchers need to be present at training sessions, matches and in the dressing room in order to build a comprehensive corpus of language used in football surroundings. Only then will it be possible to not only teach isolated words and phrases, but the necessary grammar that is involved in the different situations.

It would also be very beneficial to interview the host parents of the players. They could list those areas of private and family life where linguistic problems occur that can sometimes lead to great frustration in the boys. The input of the host parents would be especially valuable for the General English part of the course. One can assume that most of the boys encounter similar linguistic problems when living with a family which might concern food, living, traditions, etc. Standard General English textbooks will, in most cases, not be able to address these issues. The same is true for fellow players whose mother tongue is English. They would be able to report instances where they were not understood by their fellow players. To facilitate this exchange, there could be an email-exchange between foreign players and their future colleagues as well as their future host families even before the foreign boy leaves his home country. That way, they can get used to the language and have to try to make themselves understood.

Improvements can only be made if football clubs let researchers onto the pitch in order to record speech acts during training and matches. Tutors in an ESP course always try to use tasks and activities that reflect the learners' specialist world. This is difficult to do in a football environment and would only work if the tutor or a researcher would be out on the training ground and knew what kind of commands and feedback the coaches give. Only then could the tutor tailor the activities and exercises to the special needs of the players. A corpus of recorded spoken discourse is necessary to investigate the field further. There are already dictionaries with translations but the actual speech has not been recorded yet. Vendsen and Krebs (1984:154) state that, "a fundamental technique for

identifying authentic job-related language is to tape record typical dialogues among workers at a job site". As a teacher, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of the job of a football player. Only then are we able to tailor the courses to the needs of the learners. Unfortunately, football clubs have to be very secretive. There is so much money involved that they cannot talk openly to outsiders about all aspects of their club. Due to this secrecy it has, to my knowledge, not been possible so far to assemble a comprehensive corpus of "Football English". Considering the number of foreign players in English academies and clubs, such a corpus would make the lives of everyone involved a lot easier.

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Curriculum Vitae

Michaela Baur was born 29th January 1976 in Wels, Austria. She attended the *Bundesgymnasium/Bundesrealgymnasium Dr. Schauerstraße* in Wels, Austria, and later studied at the *Pädagogische Akademie des Bundes* in Linz in order to become a secondary teacher for the subjects English and Physical Education. From 2001 to 2003 she worked as a self-employed translator for *European Schoolnet* in Brussels. In 2006 she graduated with a diploma thesis in English and American Studies at the *Paris Lodron University of Salzburg*, Austria. From 2005 to 2007 she worked as a football coach for children and youths. In 2007 she moved to Switzerland and began her research for the present PhD thesis, supervised by Prof. Dr. Daniel Schreier and Prof. Dr. A. H. Jucker. She finished her thesis in 2011 and is currently working as a translator and language tutor.